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**The Public Service Ethos: a Case Study of its Meaning in a Strategic
Partnership Board**

Steven Parker

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance
with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Social Science
(Policy Studies) in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, School for
Policy Studies**

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Abstract

Previous decades have seen multi-agency partnerships growing in prominence for policymaking and service delivery. However, when partnership working has been researched in relation to the public service ethos (PSE), studies have tended to investigate collaboration between the public and private sectors and the effect on the PSE.

This dissertation contended that discussions about collaboration between the public and private sectors are distinct from other types of partnership working. The study investigated the relationship between the PSE and partnership working in a public setting.

The research questions were investigated in a senior partnership board in a city in the UK. A case study approach was used, underpinned by documentary analysis, a board observation and semi-structured interviews. The fieldwork explored the values of staff employed in public services, identified in previous research.

Four areas for discussion were identified: the PSE and partnership working; values, the PSE and partnership working; the importance of the PSE and partnership working; and the changing meaning of the PSE and its values. The findings identified three perspectives of the *micro*, *macro* and *meso* PSE. However, in contrast to suggestions that the values of public servants are the most important element of public service, it was found that the language of partnership working was more evident in the case study.

The conclusion suggests a number of contributions to understand the PSE and partnership working. Firstly, findings identify the relevance of the PSE in contemporary public services. Secondly, it informs our understanding of the role the PSE plays in multi-agency governance. Thirdly, it identifies the potential use of public service values within the discourse of integration. It also identifies a methodological contribution that it is possible to research the PSE in a public partnership board and use public service values to do so.

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Many friends and colleagues supported me throughout the D.SocSci. I would like to give my thanks to everyone in the Children's Service Planning Unit, Disabled Children's Services, as well as other colleagues in Leicester City Council. Thank you Anna Dias for help with the formatting.

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Of course, the final and biggest thanks of all must be for my wife Carolyn Howard and our sons Joe, Sam and James. They were the most supportive of people and put up with me being in 'another world' for much of the time. Thank you.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for another academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed.....

Date.....

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	4
CONTENTS.....	4
CHAPTER ONE	9
INTRODUCTION.....	9
INTRODUCTION	9
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	12
DISSERTATION STRUCTURE	13
CHAPTER TWO	14
THE PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS	14
THE PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS	16
<i>Historical perspective</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Defining the PSE.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Values and public service.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Outcomes and public services</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Public value theory</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Public service motivation and the 'calling to care'</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>The PSE and power.....</i>	<i>29</i>
DATA ON THE EXISTENCE AND RESILIENCE OF THE PSE	31
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	34
RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS	34
CHAPTER THREE	35
THE CONTEXT	35
INTRODUCTION.....	35
DESCRIBING PARTNERSHIP WORKING	35
<i>Partnership.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Multi-disciplinary work.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Networks.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Strategic multi-agency working.....</i>	<i>37</i>
PARTNERSHIPS: THE WIDER POLICY CONTEXT	37
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: POLICY CONTEXT	37
DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: POLICY CONTEXT	39
PARTNERSHIP WORKING	41
<i>Research on partnership working</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Strategic boards</i>	<i>47</i>
SUMMARY	50
CHAPTER FOUR.....	52
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	52
INTRODUCTION.....	52
RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS	52
RATIONALE AND ORIGINS OF THE RESEARCH.....	52
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	53
CASE STUDY RESEARCH.....	53

METHODS FOR DATA GATHERING	54
<i>Documentary analysis</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Non-participant observation</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Interviews</i>	<i>56</i>
VALIDITY	60
RESEARCH ETHICS.....	61
REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS	62
SUMMARY	62
CHAPTER FIVE	64
RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	64
INTRODUCTION	64
RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS	64
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY	65
CASE STUDY CONTEXT	65
BOARD DOCUMENTATION.....	65
BOARD OBSERVATION	68
PARTICIPANT’S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE BOARD	69
KEY FINDING	72
PART TWO: INTERVIEW FINDINGS ON PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND THE PUBLIC	
SERVICE ETHOS.....	73
BOARD MEMBERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF THE PSE	73
<i>Meaning of the PSE.....</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Motivation for working in public services.....</i>	<i>76</i>
KEY FINDING	78
PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES AND THE BOARD	79
BOARD MEMBERS’ VIEWS ON ‘TRADITIONAL’ PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES.....	79
<i>Accountability</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Bureaucratic behaviour.....</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Public interest</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Motivation</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Loyalty.....</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Professionalism</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Trust</i>	<i>99</i>
<i>Impartiality.....</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Judgement</i>	<i>102</i>
KEY FINDING	103
PSE AND THE BOARD - OTHER SUGGESTED VALUES.....	104
KEY FINDING	111
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5	112
CHAPTER SIX	113
DISCUSSION	113
INTRODUCTION	113
THE PSE AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING	114
<i>The meaning of the PSE in the board: the micro, macro and meso PSE</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>The role of the PSE in the board</i>	<i>121</i>
VALUES, THE PSE AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING	125
<i>Values and the PSE.....</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>The four main values: accountability, bureaucracy, the public interest and motivation</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>The inward and outward roles of the values</i>	<i>134</i>
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PSE AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING	136
<i>The hidden PSE and the overt partnership.....</i>	<i>136</i>

THE CHANGING MEANING OF THE PSE AND ITS VALUES	139
<i>Other values suggested by board members</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>Models of the transforming PSE</i>	<i>141</i>
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 6	144
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	145
CONCLUSION	145
METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION.....	145
UNDERSTANDING THE PSE - OUTDATED OR RELEVANT?.....	145
THE PSE AND ITS ROLE IN MULTI-AGENCY GOVERNANCE	147
THE POTENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES	149
IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.....	151
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	152
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	166
APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO CHAIR OF CASE STUDY BOARD.....	171
APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CASE STUDY BOARD	172
APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET	173
APPENDIX 5: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.....	175
APPENDIX 6: PARTICIPANT CODES.....	176
APPENDIX 7: ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK	177
APPENDIX 8: SCHOOL FOR POLICY STUDIES: ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA	178
APPENDIX 9: EXTRACT FROM EXCEL FRAMEWORK	185

Abbreviations

AHDC	Aiming High for Disabled Children
CLG	Communities and Local Government
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Schools
DH	Department of Health
ECM	Every Child Matters
EDCM	Every Disabled Child Matters
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NFER	National Foundation for Educational research
NPG	New Public Governance
NPM	New Public Management
PASC	Public Administration Select Committee
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PPSE	Personal Public Service Ethos
PSE	Public Service Ethos
PSM	Public Service Motivation
PVM	Public Value Management
SCIE	Social Care Institute for Excellence
TDC	Together for Disabled Children

Chapter One

Introduction

*‘...the personal values of public servants are the most important element of public service’
(Chapman, 1993c: 168).*

Introduction

The topic of this dissertation is the relationship between partnership working and the public service ethos (PSE), focusing on the values of staff employed by public services in a multi-agency board. The original idea arose from my job as a local government officer working in multi-agency boards.

This opening chapter makes the case for why the PSE and partnership working is a relevant topic of study. The concepts involved are briefly introduced, in advance of the in-depth discussions in later chapters. This introduction then sets out my ‘claim’, that is to say the purpose of the study, what is missing from current research and what is required to investigate it. The chapter concludes by detailing the research questions guiding the fieldwork, ending with a brief synopsis of the whole dissertation.

Working in the strategic planning unit of a local authority children’s services department, I had often considered the motives and beliefs held by public officers. In the course of working on this research it was noteworthy how many colleagues remarked how interesting the research sounded. Furthermore, on explaining that values were being used in my fieldwork we often agreed, when compared with Chapman’s quote above, that we had little opportunity to explore our choice of career.

Descriptions of the PSE are usually associated with acting in the public interest by those employed in public services. These are described as ‘long-established values and rules providing a benchmark for public servants and their institutions’ (Public

Administration Select Committee [PASC], 2002: 7) with public officials placing the interests of society above their own (O'Toole, 1997: 75). However, the PSE remains a contested concept, with multiple meanings that are difficult to prove or dispute. It is stated that there is no one agreed PSE and probably several (Lawton, 2005: 239), revealing elasticity as a term (Needham, 2007; 76). It can be labeled differently, as ethos, motivation or as a 'calling to care' (Cree and Davis, 2007; Brannen et al., 2007).

The term the 'PSE' suggests that a relationship exists between individuals, organisations and professions, enhanced by their desire to work in public services. This can be extended to partnerships, the subject of this dissertation. John and Johnson state that for the PSE to exist, public services need to allow employees to help others, that their jobs are useful for society, and that public staff value the intrinsic nature of their work (John and Johnson, 2008: 108).

In contrast, it is asserted that public officers are not always motivated by altruism and the public interest (Le Grand, 1997) acting as self-interested agents (Crouch, 2011: 62). There are claims that the PSE does not belong to the public sector alone but is also relevant to the voluntary and private sectors (PASC, 2002; Serco, 2006). Nevertheless, little empirical work exists to evidence what this means with many of the assertions made remaining within the realm of ideology and subjectivity.

Although a significant amount of research exists on the PSE the literature is not bound by one discipline, with discussions found in business studies, economics, and political science. Recent developments include public value management, referring to how the importance of public service can be reaffirmed in light of the impact of modernisation and New Public Management (Stoker, 2006).

When partnership working becomes associated with the PSE, previous studies have tended to investigate collaboration between the private and public sectors in major public capital investments, such as the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) (Grimshaw et al., 2002; Hebson et al., 2003). Such research has examined 'new contractual arrangements' and 'transformations' in how government provides public services and the effect of these on the PSE.

Whilst associated with ‘partnership working’, this dissertation contends that discussions about PFI and PPPs are distinct from what I call partnership working. In boards - such as the one in this study - participants are normally employed by public services. In recent decades such multi-agency partnership working has seen local government increasingly working with other agencies, such partnerships growing in prominence for policymaking and service delivery (Bochel and Bochel, 2004; Frost et al., 2005). Discussions have included organisational boundaries (DH, 1998; 2003), resources (DH, 2007) and improving user outcomes (DfES, 2003; DH, 2003).

Purpose of study

The aim of this dissertation is to close a gap in academic research specifically focusing on public services, partnership working and the PSE. The rationale for choosing the topic was because the collaborative work I was involved in as a local government officer was almost always with other public service colleagues and to a lesser degree the voluntary sector. Although Grout (2009) discusses the increased role of the private sector in delivering public services, the ‘public-private’ in partnership was not my personal experience. Indeed, after a decade of working in multi-agency boards, I had rarely attended a partnership meeting where a private sector representative regularly attended.

The focus of the dissertation is on *process*, that is to say the meaning of the PSE in the board, rather than to evaluate how it might contribute to board *outcomes*. However, process and outcomes are related. In terms of boards existing to ‘improve outcomes’ for service users, it is inevitable that tensions will arise about improvements, complexities in managing partnerships, as well as which participants have most influence on local governance.

Other matters linked to the PSE include one’s life history, choice of profession and the wish to contribute to society. As a manager, I had reflected on values and whether they altered as one changed role from being a social worker, for example, to becoming involved in multi-agency strategy making. Previously employed as a social worker, it had perhaps been easier for me to understand what the beliefs of those working with ‘real’ people might be, identified by a commitment to service users,

equality and social justice. These considerations, as well as previous academic work on the PSE (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Plant, 2003), led me to choose values as part of the focus of my study.

In addition, if partnership working in public services was the ‘mot du jour’ why had the PSE not been investigated from a multi-agency perspective? Lawton has described ethos as being concerned with the culture of an organisation (Lawton, 2005: 238), but surely if a public ethos is thought to be shared among public agencies and organisations it has relevance to multi-agency partnerships? Furthermore, if, as Chapman says (1993c: 168), ‘...the personal values of public servants are the most important element of public service’, why after 20 years in the public sector had I never discussed them with colleagues.

Research questions

The research questions that the study seeks to answer are:

- What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?
- What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?
- In addition to the ‘traditional’ values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important by board participants?

The research is set within the policy of *Every Child Matters* (ECM) (DfES, 2003) and *Aiming High for Disabled Children* (AHDC) (DfES, 2007). I chose this area as I was knowledgeable about planning services for disabled children and young people¹.

The questions were investigated in a case study of a strategic board planning disabled children’s services in a city in England called Midland City. The role of the board was to oversee and coordinate local strategy for disabled children’s services, providing a forum for multi-agency working and to resolve difficult issues that arose. The fieldwork took place in autumn and winter 2009-10.

¹ Where possible ‘children and young people’ or ‘disabled children and young people’ is shortened to children, or disabled children, to avoid repetition. However, I have not done this where the term is used in titles, for example government policy or the name of a board

Dissertation Structure

Chapter 2 explores and evaluates the PSE to set out a theoretical framework for the study. Chapter 3 sets out the context within which the research is set. This is primarily associated with children and young people, namely *Aiming High for Disabled Children* (AHDC) and multi-agency partnership working.

In chapter 4 the methodology used in the fieldwork is discussed, which follows a case study approach (Yin, 2003) underpinned by documentary analysis, a board observation and semi-structured interviews. Chapter 5 reports the main findings on the PSE and partnership working. It provides a background to the case study and research context and reports the main interview findings under three headings: board members' understanding of the PSE, public service values and the board, and the PSE and the board - other suggested values.

Chapter 6 draws out 4 key themes for discussion in relation to the existing literature: the PSE and partnership working; values, the PSE and partnership working; the importance of the PSE and partnership working, and; the changing meaning of the PSE and its values². Lastly, chapter 7 considers the conclusions of the study, implications for policy and practice, limitations and future research.

² The word value is used to describe terms such as accountability, motivation and the public interest. However, I acknowledge that other words have been used to describe values, for example 'features' (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996) and 'characteristics' (Plant, 2003). I use the term 'value' because my own experience suggests that this term is generally well understood in local government.

Chapter Two

The Public Service Ethos

Introduction

This chapter discusses the PSE in order to set out a theoretical framework for the dissertation. The literature was identified by undertaking an initial search of the *Web of Science* (WoS) database using the terms ‘public service ethos’ as well as ‘public service ethos’ and ‘partnership’. The search dates selected ranged from 1990 to 2006 chosen because of the interest in partnership working during this period. This initial search identified no specific articles about my chosen area, with most focusing on public-private partnerships. I therefore undertook an additional search on WoS and International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBIS) supplementing my search terms with ‘multi-agency’.

Reading the journal articles helped me to identify other literature associated with public services. Furthermore, as the aim of the study was to understand the relationship between the PSE and partnership working, it was inevitable that I would encounter the related topics of public service values, modernisation and public value theory. As Plant notes (2003: 560) as with most social and political contexts, an attempt at the analysis of one concept brings in other related ideas.

It is useful to differentiate between the public sector and public service ethos, terms frequently used interchangeably (Brereton and Temple, 1999: 456). Whereas the term public *sector* ethos usually refers to single agencies or professions, the change to a public *service* ethos represents the transition from government to governance - a key issue for partnership working. The term PSE (rather than public ‘sector’ ethos) describes the move from the delivery of services by the public sector to their supply by the public, private, and voluntary sector. Defining the terms is helpful for two reasons. Firstly, they are used without considering differences between them and, secondly, they reflect the transition from mono-organisational public services to a plurality of providers. Such a shift has expanded the PSE to include non-state

providers, suggesting that the private and voluntary sectors can adopt a public ethos as effectively as the state (CBI, 2001: 1; Needham, 2007: 81)

For example, Stoker (2006: 48) states that an open-minded approach is needed to identify the best supplier of services, whether they are in the public, private, or voluntary sector. The government previously set out the need to ensure a 'level playing field between public, private and voluntary sector provision' (DfES, 2007: 49) for disabled children's services, implying there are relationships with these sectors that, in reality, may not exist. Although it is acknowledged that the term PSE has been applied to non-public provision, as a term it can be interpreted differently when associated with partnership working. Firstly, the PSE can be described as informing public agencies working in partnership, for instance health and local government. Secondly, the PSE can be associated with public agencies working with the voluntary sector, as well as other stakeholders such as parents. Thirdly, it has been linked to public agencies working with both the voluntary sector and private sectors. However, different practices exist and in boards - such as the one in my study - participants are ordinarily employed by public services with limited representation by the voluntary sector and parents and rarely including members of the private sector.

For these reasons, I chose the term the *public service* rather than the *public sector* ethos as the board in this study presented a degree of diversity in terms of its participants. In my research, the public 'service' ethos is used because partnership working occurs between different public agencies at the partnership board. If the terms public 'sector' ethos was used, this would suggest activity constrained within the boundaries of public organisations, which was not the case. These included local government, health, the voluntary sector and parents, as well as 'quango' type agencies such as Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

As this chapter informs the overarching aim of investigating the relationship between partnership working and the PSE in a multi-agency partnership board, it is important to be clear about the parameters of the chosen literature. This chapter includes discussion of historical perspectives; definition of the PSE (including a discussion of modernisation and NPM); values and public service; outcomes and public services;

public value theory; public service motivation and the calling to care; and, the PSE and power. The latter part of the chapter headed 'evaluating the PSE' focuses on empirical research, in which I explore evidence of its existence as well as considering the resilience of the concept.

The Public Service Ethos

Historical perspective

19th Century Civil Service reforms are frequently cited as the start of a modern PSE in the UK (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641; Lawton, 1998: 42; Horton, 2006) with public values finding expression in reforms arising from the Northcote-Trevelyan report *The Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service* (1854). In 1870 the Civil Service was divided into higher and lower classes, with universities, notably Oxbridge, determining the subjects required for entry into the higher Civil Service administration. The study of philosophical writers, including Plato and Aristotle, inspired a sense of virtuous behaviour and commitment to public duty (Horton, 2006, 34 - 35). This legitimised definitions for public servants of a PSE built upon classic values of accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, public interest, loyalty and trust. The 20th Century saw a continuation in the Civil Service of a focused approach to best ethical practice for public officials, with Fulton's report of 1968 described as the 'beginning of the end' for the public service ideal (O'Toole, 2006).

A further historical perspective on the PSE is its relationship with an expanding 20th Century welfare state. For example, as a percentage of state expenditure, social services accounted for 9.4% in 1840, 18% in 1900 and, with welfare intervention by the Liberal Government, at 32.8% by 1910. Professional society continued to expand after the First World War with increased state investment requiring more public staff, and in the pre-Second World War period the general pattern remained one of growth (Harris, 2004: 13).

Following the Second World War, state involvement was broadly accepted as a logical extension of the controls required during the war (Dutton, 2002: 156) with

concerns about the inadequacy of market mechanisms to distribute social goods fairly, especially after the 1930s depression. Individual welfare was increasingly influenced by the establishment of the modern welfare state, with the Beveridge Report's challenge to what was called the five giants of 'want, disease, ignorance, squalour and idleness' (Lowe, 2002: 153). In this period public ownership increased significantly, the agenda for a modern welfare state was defined, the National Health Service and National Insurance Acts were passed, and a renewed impetus for public housing and education was seen (Morgan, 2001: 29). During this period there was a continued expansion of public employment, including local government and health staff, growing from 5% to 25% as a percentage of the total workforce between 1950 and 1951 (Lowe 2002: 222). Growth continued through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s with a significant increase in the size and power of local government as the employer of a substantial new group of professional middle-class employees (Morgan, 2001: 476).

Defining the PSE

As noted above, it is difficult - and probably impossible - to provide one single account of the PSE. An established description of it as 'long-established values and rules providing a benchmark for public servants and their institutions' (PASC, 2002: 7), suggesting a responsibility for public officers to do what is right and good, and acting unselfishly while doing so. Furthermore, public officials are required to apply principles and standards to their actions (Kernaghan, 1992: 16), ensuring rules are enforced in an impartial and disinterested way (Plant, 2003: 564). The PSE is traditionally thought to play a role in ensuring the probity and impartiality of public staff, but with an obligation to serve people whose market power left them reliant on the state (Needham, 2007: 75). Such descriptions emphasise how public servants use 'public duty' to inform their decision-making and set their own interests aside (O'Toole, 2006: 3).

Additionally, the PSE is described as a set of values guiding the behaviour of public servants, with individuals subscribing to an ethos which promotes the public rather than private interests (Lawton et al., 2013: 50). However, although the PSE can be described positively, it has, conversely, been linked with bureaucratic processes which undermine it (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 644). It is questioned if values

associated with it are used purely as rhetoric (Plant, 2003: 560) with the PSE used to defend decisions that are not in the best interests of the public.

Needham (2007) describes four approaches to assist understanding of the PSE. The first approach is that the PSE signals sympathy and understanding for public service workers, such as the commitment of teachers and nurses. This perspective can be aligned with the descriptions of the PSE as something that is principled and lauded. This links to Needham's second approach, with the PSE used as a talisman against radical change, with union leaders arguing the incompatibility of a distinct public sector to profit making and private sector involvement. However, it is also thought that the PSE can be strengthened by private sector involvement, an approach to the delivery of public services which has grown in recent decades. Fourthly, Needham suggests that in practice, the PSE can be interpreted as negative and obstructive and therefore needs to be challenged.

Needham's third and fourth approaches, the involvement of the private sector and the PSE as negative and obstructive, introduces a different interpretation of the PSE to the focus on principles and duty. For instance, attention to 'right conduct' and the 'public interest' can also be interpreted as officials being committed to their own needs above those of citizens. Here, the motivations and behaviour of public servants are described in public choice theory which asserts that public officials are, in reality, self-interested agents (Crouch, 2011: 62) and that professionals and suppliers of public services are utility 'maximisers'. Furthermore, the traditional approach to delivering public services has been described as a 'monopoly on the PSE', delivered by hierarchical departments and self-regulating professions, with services monitored by politicians and bureaucracies (Stoker, 2006: 44).

Associated with this critique, Le Grand theorises the behaviour of public servants and welfare recipients by labelling them as knights, knaves, pawns and queens (Le Grand, 1997; 2004). Contrary to officers thought to be working in the public interest, Le Grand suggests they can be motivated more by their own self-interest. In addition to knights and knaves, Le Grand describes recipients of welfare as 'pawns', passively receiving support they are given, or as 'queens', implying they should have

unrestricted service choice (Le Grand, 1997; 2004). The queen's perspective can be linked to service users renamed as customers and consumers (Needham, 2006).

Le Grand suggests the Queen's perspective will ensure public services are more responsive to delivering clients' needs, as well as challenging the 'knavish' behaviour of public servants. Such positions have informed - and have been informed by - the modernisation of public services, stated as an approach which has vigorously challenged the delivery of traditional public services (Martin et al., 2004). It is additionally stated that public services can be provided by the private and voluntary sectors, in lieu of the public sector, to improve efficiency (Stoker, 2006: 48). Whereas the 'traditional PSE' is associated with public administration, public service 'modernisation' is related to the theory of New Public Management (NPM), an approach adopted by governments to transform public services since the 1980s. NPM is described as a move to disaggregation and competition in service delivery; the introduction of private sector management techniques; disciplined resource management; 'hands-on' management; measuring performance, and; greater emphasis on output (Hood, 1995; Lawton et al., 2013). It is suggested that such reforms will improve public services by challenging the traditional PSE (Needham, 2007).

Furthermore, NPM has informed the application of business terminology in public services using private sector principles of efficiency, competition and entrepreneurialism - what Grimshaw et al. call a 'language of reform' (2002: 478). It is claimed such changes will ensure services are delivered economically, are responsive to consumers (Stoker, 2006:44), and 'evidenced based' (Sheldon and Chilvers, 2000), an approach championed by the New Labour administration in the 1990s. However, it is conversely stated that an audit and performance management culture has been corrosive of the PSE (Barberis, 2001: 124). Needham (2006), too, discusses modernisation and its relationship with 'customer' focused approaches in public services, with the term customer used in lieu of 'service user' or 'citizen'. Customer based language is described as contributing to 'personalising' services, offering choice and being courteous, thus helping to improve service delivery (Brereton and Temple, 1999: 471; Needham, 2006: 851; Needham, 2011). Nevertheless, in this sense a customer focus may undermine the principle of public

services allocated on the basis of need, suggesting that customers may have higher expectations about what services they are eligible for (Needham, 2006).

The transition from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ public services throws into question whether a golden age for public service delivery ever existed (Lawton, 1998: 51-66). Although a major motivation for change is the perception, as well as the reality, of failings in public services, it is stated that whatever the shortcomings of public services, there is something ‘necessary, special and distinctive’ about them (PASC, 2002). Needham notes that while the boundaries between the public and private sectors are increasingly ‘porous’, the idea of a distinct PSE remains popular (Needham, 2007: 75).

To conclude, theories of the PSE arise from research, public policy, society and the economy. Perhaps the best solution is to accept that the term has multiple meanings which are influenced by constant change, including pressure from economics, politics and ideology. Although often taken for granted as a term, it is questionable whether it is possible to define the PSE (Lawton, 2005: 239), as it is used in different ways with elasticity as a term (Needham, 2007: 76). On the PSE and modernisation, Lawton remarks that it is inevitable that as public officials engage with other organisations this will expose them to different practices. Although reforms have occurred, with different definitions of the PSE it is difficult to prove or disprove the effects any changes (Lawton, 1998).

Values and public service

For the PSE an important relationship between values and public services exists to inform the practice of officers, as well as being used as a tool for empirical research. Values arising from the work of Pratchett and Wingfield (2006) and Plant (2003), discussed below, inform my fieldwork. Defining what a value is can be problematic and identifying how they are meaningful for staff in specific settings, such as in the public sector, is challenging (Stackman et al., 2006). A focus on values sits alongside other philosophical approaches associated with the behaviour of public officers, including utilitarian, consequentialist and deontological perspectives (Scheffler, 1988; Banks, 2004), which are not discussed in this dissertation.

Discussions of virtuous behaviour have a well-established history, existing since classical times (Pence, 1991: 251; Plant, 2003). For example, Macalalay and Lawton discuss virtue in relation to public service, noting Aristotle's commitment to the polis (2006). Such perspectives continue to have contemporary resonance with questions asked about how, and if, ethics can be taught to public servants (Jackson, 1993) and how they can inform practice (Banks, 2004). Such discussions inform the notion of 'ideal values' for public officers (Plant, 2003) and suggest that values are the most important element of public service, originating from a variety of sources including personal background, education and training (Chapman, 1993c: 168 -169). In recent years the UK Government Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) suggested the need for a Public Service Code to describe the core values and standards of behaviour for public servants. These values included integrity, objectivity, accountability and political impartiality, among others (Nolan, 1995; Civil Service Code, 2010).

A values based approach to investigating the PSE continues to hold a key position, with the PSE described as an inventory of attributes, for instance those used to study local government officers (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1994; 1996). Values selected by Pratchett and Wingfield for their research were accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, the public interest, motivation and loyalty, described in Table 1. Their work has been cited as a basis for further research on the PSE by Lawton (1998), Hebson et al. (2003), Stackman et al. (2006) and Needham (2006).

Table 1 – Five values of the public service ethos (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641-2).	
Accountability	Public servants are expected to accept the legitimacy of political structures as well as being committed to implementing political policy without reference to their own views.
Bureaucratic behaviour	Public servants must demonstrate characteristics of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.
Public interest	Public servants extend an interest beyond the boundaries of their particular organisation or profession to serve the ‘public good’.
Motivation	Public servants identify with carrying out rewarding work for society over self-interest or a pursuit of profit.
Loyalty	Public servants operate among a complex set of loyalties including their department, organisation, profession, government institutions & community).

In addition, other commentators have used values to investigate the PSE. In an article on the PSE and its compatibility with private and voluntary providers, Plant (2003) identifies motivation as a value - as discussed by Pratchett and Wingfield (2006), but suggests additional values of professionalism, trust, impartiality and judgement, detailed in Table 2. (Plant, 2003). The combined values of Pratchett and Wingfield will be used in my fieldwork and are detailed in the public services values document attached to the interview schedule in Appendix 1.

Table 2 – Four values of the public service ethos (Plant, 2003: 562-65)	
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to motivation with public servants choosing a vocation to serve the public. • Professional values act as a guide to emphasise service. • Professional knowledge used for public good rather than private benefit.
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust is complex and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Trust between citizens and the public sector. ➢ Trust between government and citizens. ➢ Trust between government and the public sector. ➢ Trust between people working in the public sector. ➢ Trust between the public sector and other partners e.g. the private and voluntary sectors. ➢ Trust may be questioned where there is an asymmetry of information and expertise between professionals and the public
Impartiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules are enforced in an impartial and disinterested way.
Judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ties trust impartiality and professionalism together. • The role of judgment is ‘eliminable’ as there will always be a gap between rules and their allocation in particular cases. • Judgment cannot be guided by one dominant value, for example efficiency. • ‘Vertical trust’ describes how consumers of services must be confident in how judgment is exercised, so they are assured that their own case has been judged correctly. • Horizontal trust describes the confidence required from others in the organisation that judgement will be exercised appropriately.

Although consensus exists on the fundamental values required for public service, there will be always be ambiguity about their use (Pratchett, 2000). For example, accountability is stated as being practiced differently in diverse contexts and cannot be reduced to a ready-made formula (Chapman, 2000: 224-228). Newman (2008: 252) cites categories of ‘accountability of whom’, ‘accountability for what’, ‘accountability to whom’ and ‘accountability through what means’. Lawton (2005) sees accountability linked to bureaucracy, the law, politicians, the market, to peers

and to profession (Johnson, 1972). Cooke et al. (2013) see accountability applied differently in the individual professions of teaching, medicine and law. However, regarding partnership working, Lawton (2005) notes that being accountable to a wider range of partners is increasingly prominent.

A further value having diverse interpretations is the *public interest*, with legal, democratic and social meanings, including to the public interest of citizens and taxpayers, or specific groups such as disabled children. As an abstract ideal, the public interest is a 'contested concept' or something that can be realised only in 'concrete' decisions (Lawton et al., 2013: 31-34). Different interpretations of the public interest can be identified in public partnership boards, with the need to balance *democratic* and *stakeholder* perspectives (Cornforth, 2003). In practice different 'public interests' will be identified in a board, such as those seen by an elected councillor wishing to remain in power, compared with other participants attending a board (Peck and Dickinson, 2008: 64).

It has been suggested that the activities of public servants should be informed by the Nolan Committee's 'seven principles of public life' of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership (Nolan, 1995). However, it is noteworthy that values that may be considered as important are missing, for example trust (Lawton et al., 2013: 43). Trust is described as complex (Plant, 2003) but essential for successful partnership working (Lawton 2005: 238); as a benchmark for network governance (Davies, 2011: 6) but it is also thought to be 'taken for granted' by people (Rhodes 2007: 1246).

Lawton discusses 'trusting in and within' public services. He remarks that trust is found within networks and is based on rationality, familiarity, predictability and performance, with these networks facilitated by shared goals, values, goodwill and commitment, as well as costs and benefits for public staff. Several other forms of trust are identified. Firstly, as 'abstract systems and government' based on familiarity, predictability and confidence in systems. Secondly, trust in 'personal relations' with familiarity, predictability friendship, family ties and reciprocity. Thirdly, trust exists within organisations and can be identified in roles, performance, power relationships, rules and culture. Fourthly, trust in professionals is based in

their power and knowledge, facilitated by professional ethos and integrity. The fifth form of trust, 'of organisations', is based on their performance and their responsiveness (Lawton, 2002).

Lastly, there have been attempts to identify agreed values and standards of behaviour for public staff (Nolan, 1995; Civil Service Code, 2010; Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2013). PASC (2002) suggested the need for an updated PSE to help inform accountability, as well as moving from an 'unwritten traditional ethos' to clearer and more explicit values reflecting the upholding of an ethos by public staff. However, the diversity of actors and their contexts, calls into question how far it is possible to design standards of behaviour with common meanings across diverse settings (Pratchett, 2000: 115) while at the same time avoiding introducing a catechism culture (Barberis, 2001: 124). While it is possible to be relatively clear about the normative understandings of values, they remain contested concepts open to interpretation (Pratchett, 2000: 115 - 117). Pratchett remarks that staff from separate agencies define public life differently with values interpreted and informed by the legal context of each profession, as well as the diverse backgrounds of the actors involved.

Outcomes and public services

Aspirations to improve 'outcomes' for service users is widespread in public services, as seen in the policy context of *Every Child Matters* (ECM) (2003), one of the policies informing the fieldwork. Outcomes are described as being central to improving services for users and carers (Nicholas et al., 2003: 6), as well as being a tool for managing public provision (Bevan and Hood, 2006). However, defining what an 'outcome' means is conceptually difficult (Willis, 2001). Indeed, the original ECM document set out a normative understanding of outcomes without critically engaging with what the term meant, with one commentator describing ECM outcomes as 'the epitome of rational decision making' (Hudson, 2006: 227).

Dickinson notes different kinds of outcomes for service users. *Service process outcomes* relates to the impact of how a service is delivered, including respect for dignity, privacy and confidentiality; *change outcomes* suggest improvements made in

physical and emotional functioning, such as depression; and *maintenance outcomes* to prevent or delay a deterioration in health, well-being or the quality of life (Dickinson, 2008: 7-9).

Discussions about improving outcomes are associated with both strategic decisions relating to a population, for example disabled children, or specifically to a single child. However, the two positions are linked and it is important that attention is focused on the ‘loose-coupling’ between strategic and operational goals (Lawton, 2005: 239). This, too, is found in children and young people’s partnership boards where the term ‘improved outcomes’ might be used to discuss outcomes for a group of young people or for a single child.

It is also questioned if an outcome such as ‘wellbeing’ is too abstract or whether some outcomes are in fact ‘master values’ which lesser outcomes contribute to (Scanlon, 1998; Unity-Sale, 2007: 16–17). Churchill points out the technical problems involved in translating outcomes into indicators is the risk of different organisations interpreting them differently. She notes that defining priority outcomes can lead to weaknesses in areas of policy seen as being of a lesser priority, which children and families may perceive as gaps in provision (Churchill, 2007: 97-98).

Hudson addressed ambiguities in the policy process when reconciling users’ views with government policy. He notes the ECM ‘outcomes led’ approach, although based on the views of children, is set within a policy where achieving outcomes can only be carried out through partnership working. As a result, *policy conflict* may exist when more than one stakeholder sees a policy as directly relevant to its interests or where incongruent views exist. *Policy ambiguity* can arise where there is a lack of clarity around goals and means. Therefore, these two features of the policy process can be in tension, with a risk at implementation that outcomes are re-interpreted to fit in with other organisational and professional agendas (Hudson, 2006).

Public value theory

Informing discussions of the PSE is the theory of ‘public value’ (Moore, 1995; Cabinet Office, 2002; Stoker, 2006; Davis and West, 2009; Benington and Moore, 2010). Theories of public value argue that although, economic and market-based uses

of 'value' have tended to dominate, the public sector has wider and more complex goals and values which are contested in political and administrative processes (Erridge, 2007: 1029-1030). From this perspective public value theory has been described as a 'corrective' to NPM (Horner et al., 2006: 12-14) with NPM thought to be deficient in the values required for public services (O'Flynn (2007). For public value, the public sector is different to the commercial sector, a view shared with the theory of public administration (Stoker, 2006: 46). Benington and Moore describe public value as comprising a number of issues, including improving outcomes, public satisfaction, and longer term policy processes as opposed to short term responses. They state that public value is created collaboratively between services and their users, an approach frequently used in partnership boards. Public value does not solely belong to the state, but can be created by a range of agencies including the private and third sectors (Benington and Moore, 2010: 33).

Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) explored the meaning of public value noting seven 'value constellations': (1) values associated with the public sector's contribution to society; (2) values associated with the transformation of stakeholder interests into decisions; (3) values and the relationship between public administration and politicians; (4) values associated with the relationship between public administration and wider society; (5) values associated with intra-organisational aspects of public administration; (6) values associated with the behaviour of public-sector employees; and (7) values associated with the relationship between public administration and citizens.

Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) identify analytical problems associated with studying public value and suggest that research on public value is confused by general problems related to studying values. Erridge has additionally critiqued the term 'public value' by highlighting difficulties in defining and measuring 'public', 'value' and 'values'. He notes the term is open to different interpretations in accordance with the strategic priorities of politicians. Additionally, 'value' suggests the pursuit of personal or group goals but without clarifying these, some values will be excluded, with powerful and dominant values more closely aligned with power (Erridge, 2007: 1030).

In practice, public value has the potential to reinforce the strategic aspirations of those working in public services by focusing on creating value by sharing priorities and resources. These can include strategic multi-agency plans to improve the lives of disabled children or in how individuals influence change by means of small scale, often informal, collaboration.

Public service motivation and the 'calling to care'

This section discusses what is called 'public service motivation' (PSM) and the 'calling to care' (Perry and Wise, 1990; Perry, 1997; Cree and Davis, 2007; Brannen et al., 2007; Vandenabeele, 2011; Moynihan et al., 2013; Pederson, 2013). The two themes are not generally linked together, with PSM being survey orientated and the 'calling to care' having a qualitative, biographical and personal emphasis. However, they are brought together here with both concepts associated with the motivation to work in public services. As a term, public service motivation (PSM) is used alongside PSE, defined as an individual's predisposition for responding to motives grounded in public institutions (Perry and Wise, 1990; Perry, 1996; Camilleri, 2007; Vandenabeele, 2011; Lawton et al., 2013: 52). It has been found to be based on an attraction to policy making and politics, the public interest and civic duty, and compassion and self-sacrifice (Perry, 1996). Research has identified differences and similarities between the values of public and private sector staff, indicating why individuals may choose to work in specific sectors (Stackman et al., 2006).

Perry (1997) researched the antecedents of PSM detailing a number of influences informing it. These included the influence of family and parental background, political belief, religion, identifying oneself with a particular profession and an individual's demographic characteristics. Perry suggests that an individual's PSM developed from exposure to a range of experiences, some related to childhood, others associated with religion, as well as those linked to professional life. However, although the study confirmed the hypothesis, a number of issues were identified requiring further investigation, particularly the link between religion and PSM.

The 'calling to care', which I have coupled here with PSM, additionally links with the motivation to work in public services. This is associated with the biographies of care workers and how their early lives and childhoods influenced their personal ethos

as professionals. For instance, Cree and Davis interviewed social workers about the origins of their interest in social work as a career. Reasons included the involvement of social workers in their own families as children, a commitment to social justice, or the influence of meeting a social worker in adult life (Cree and Davis, 2007: 26 - 29). Brannen et al. investigated professionals working with vulnerable children, with issues raised including the origin of their care ethic, how they first started in their career and understanding their role. Biographical interview data raised issues on change and continuity for identities and career pathways (Brannen et al., 2007). In this sense ‘...the issue of commitment transcends the managerial agenda and that commitments made by individuals represents the values and beliefs they hold and the priorities they choose and actions they take over long periods of their lives’ (Lawton et al., 2013: 61).

Hoggett et al. (2006) note the need to challenge ‘rational’ descriptions of professional working with subjective accounts of emotional commitment. Discussing the relationship between identity, life interest and commitment to welfare they note how psycho-social studies focusing on individual subjects are largely absent from most recent social and political theory. They remark that although phrases such as the ‘public service ethic’ are easily spoken, they seem to touch the surface of what is, for many workers, something deeply held and is integral to their identity (Hoggett et al., 2006a: 689). This view can be contrasted with public staff represented as working in bureaucracies with rationality placed over emotion as ‘a marginal mode of experience to be minimized in routine organisational life’ (Putnam and Mumby, 1993: 41).

The PSE and power

When addressing the relationship between the PSE and partnership working, power holds a key position in terms of how authority is manifested in public institutions, achieving results, and defining and influencing the diverse tasks involved in collaboration. For multi-agency partnerships power can be observed in a number of settings, including between national and local policy makers, relationships between organisations and professions, formal and informal collaboration, as well as in interpersonal relationships.

Lukes (2005) proposes three dimensions of power usefully applied to multi-agency partnership working. A 'one-dimensional' view of power describes overt decision making where clear outcomes of decisions are recorded. 'Two-dimensional' views of power see a more covert exercise of power with a manipulative element. This may be identified in partnership working dominated by particularly powerful partners (Balloch and Taylor, 2001: 8). Lastly, Lukes' 'three-dimensional' view of power focuses on the shaping of wider values, norms and ideologies. For example, as power is played out in 'new orthodoxies' current policy discourse can make old fashioned what was once innovative (Lukes, 2005: 16- 29).

Furthermore, what is termed 'corporate governance' informs how large organisations are 'directed and controlled' (Kooiman, 1999: 68). Although bureaucracies are conventionally demarcated by organisational boundaries, their relationship with multi-agency partnership working highlights questions about the relationship between power and collaboration. Giddens (1971: 157) notes Weber's definition of legal authority, in which the exercise of authority and power in bureaucratic organisations is seen in the form of a vertical hierarchy of officers and qualifications. However, in the 1980s political scientists increasingly referred to governance, as distinct from government, reflecting an increased involvement of a plurality of actors pursuing common policy goals through networks (Kjaer, 2004: 3). This undoubtedly challenges the meaning of power manifested in single organisations, when agencies meet in collaboration.

Although a shift in governance has undoubtedly occurred, central government remains a powerful influence on local partnership working. Here, Hudson cites 'authoritative strategies' used to enforce aspects of inter-organisational working, for example legislation (Hudson, 1987).

Power is not only manifested in policy hierarchies, organisations and departments, but also found in smaller scale relationships and negotiations, such as exacting amendments to partnership documents or excluding stakeholders from discussions. For example, Freeman and Peck (2007) investigated governance in a joint commissioning board, with boards described as 'arenas of action' defined by rules, partners' resources and a search for shared meaning. Citing Hajer, a 'dramaturgical'

framework was identified to describe a performative dimension of governance, through consideration of the setting(s) in which deliberation takes place and the norms expressed during the process (Freeman and Peck, 2007: 912). Hajer outlines four concepts of *scripting*, about who is involved in a board and how active participants are in discussions; *setting* referring to how environment and artefacts (including reports and presentations) construct roles; *staging*, concerning how participants are managed at the board; and *performance* related to how board interaction creates knowledge, understanding and power relationships (Hajer, 2006; Freeman and Peck, 2007).

Positionality is also associated with power, usually with power relations linking to gender, ethnicity and culture (Franks, 2001: 4-6). However, positionality can manifest in participants' status, skill or force of personality in a board. Variations include 'ascribed' positionality, (generally the case with gender); 'selective' positionality (for example those who opt for a particular position) and 'enforced' positionality (when others forcibly define a position whether it meets with subjective criteria or not) (Franks, 2001: 6). In a board positionality might include a GP's view being assigned greater authority than a nurse; inhibition about voicing a lack of support for a policy in front of one's manager; and the views of some board members given greater legitimacy because of personal experiences. Positionality links to subtle uses of power, including poor relationships between officers 'not getting on' leading to issue avoidance or non-attendance. Such barriers to inter-professional practice have been described as the blurring of professional conflict with personal issues (Hall, 2005: 193). Power relationships associated with gender, social class, race, disability and sexuality may be exhibited in partnership boards (Hugman, 1991; Witz, 1992; Hall, 2005),

Data on the existence and resilience of the PSE

Whereas the discussion to this point has focused on theory, the remainder of this chapter summarises key research on the PSE. This is included in order to demonstrate that it is an area where empirical work has been carried out, which my research builds on. Lawton et al. suggests a deficit of empirical research on the PSE, especially when compared with the field of PSM (Lawton et al., 2013: 53). However,

empirical research on the PSE has undoubtedly contributed to theory building (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996) and the PSE has been explored by researching officers and professionals (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Needham, 2006) as well as in public-private partnerships (Hebson et al., 2003). To date there remains a gap in research on the relationship between the PSE and multi-agency partnership working in the public sector.

Firstly, cited as a key piece of research (Hebson et al., 2003; Needham, 2006), Pratchett and Wingfield investigated the extent to which local government officers believed in the PSE. In addition, they assessed how changes and reforms in public services had influenced officers' perceptions of the five values of a generic PSE: accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, public interest, motivation and loyalty (Pratchett and Wingfield, 2006). Although a high level of belief in the PSE was found not all participants described it favourably, with many associating it with bureaucracy and inefficiency. Pratchett and Wingfield's findings revealed the importance of personal and demographic issues with staff working longer in public services having a stronger allegiance to the PSE. 271 officers took part in the study and within the sample more than 80% of those who had worked in local government for 20 years or more declared a belief in the PSE compared with 30% of those with less than 5 years' service. Male staff revealed a preference for working in the public sector compared with female colleagues. Interestingly officers exposed to competition and market based reforms were least likely to believe in, or support, values relating to the PSE.

Pratchett and Wingfield discussed the 'new institutionalism' - how the PSE can be described as an 'informal' institution positioned within formal organisations (Pratchett and Wingfield, 2006: 648-9). They suggest that the PSE resists change to services by socialising individuals to accept its norms and standards. Furthermore, it was noted that although the chosen values provided a generic PSE, the PSE also restricted change by institutionalising the behaviour of individuals. Lastly, Pratchett and Wingfield argue that the PSE has a 'symbolic' role with organisations subscribing to values and attitudes - not only because of the duties required - but because they provide meaning to activities performed within them.

Using Pratchett and Wingfield's five features of a generic PSE, Hebson et al. (2003) explored how the delivery of public services in public private partnerships (PPPs) had transformed traditional public sector values. They found that the contracting arrangements associated with PPPs had led to some weakening of values associated with the PSE amongst managers and officers. For example, an understanding of loyalty had changed with more emphasis given to the newly contracted 'service' rather than to the previous public sector employer or the new private sector owner (Hebson et al., 2003: 498). New contractual relationships had, to some degree, eroded traditional understandings of accountability and bureaucratic behaviour connected to working within public services, leading to a concern that traditional understandings of values had been undermined by a requirement to monitor contracts (Hebson et al., 2003: 491). However, they found that the public interest and motivation continued to be important values (Hebson et al., 2003: 498).

Hebson et al. suggest contractual arrangements undermined opportunities to develop 'high trust' relationships, with one partner responsible for monitoring contracts and another using their expertise to evade this monitoring (Hebson et al., 2003: 497-498). Another issue was the lack of trust in managers voicing a profit motive, with the suggestion that these managers might not pass traditional values on to employees. However, it remains the case that workers were committed to the public interest, providing examples of working 'beyond contract'.

Exploring whether a public service ethos still existed, John and Johnson analysed data from the 2008 *British Social Attitudes* survey (John and Johnson, 2008). Evidence suggested that motivations for public sector employees are very different to private sector workers. Focusing on younger public sector workers it was found that people were more likely to value a socially useful job, with twice as many public staff strongly disagreeing that a job was just a way to earn money. The study found that 42% of staff in the public sector were 'very satisfied' with their job compared with only 35% in the private sector (John and Johnson, 2008). Additionally, a gap was identified between the beliefs of young public and private sector employees, with approximately two-thirds of public sector employees strongly agreeing their job was useful to society, compared with less than a fifth in the private sector (John and Johnson, 2008: 116).

John and Johnson concluded that increased support for the PSE was linked to the types of people attracted to the public sector. Almost two-thirds of younger public sector employees thought their job was useful to society, compared with Pratchett and Wingfield who found a stronger allegiance to the PSE for those who had worked longer in the public sector (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 645). John and Johnson associated this commitment to public service by younger people with a 'new idealism' related to increased awareness about social and environmental issues.

Also demonstrating the existence of the PSE, Gregg et al. (2008) examined pro-social behaviour in the delivery of public services. They found that 46% of employees in education, health and social care in the non-profit sector undertook some unpaid overtime, described as donated labour, compared with 29% of their counterparts in the private sector. Furthermore, employees of non-profit welfare services were 12% more likely to undertake unpaid overtime than their private sector counterparts.

Theoretical framework

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the relationship between partnership working and the PSE. This chapter has reviewed theoretical and empirical literature associated with the PSE and concludes that the concept is broad and contested. Nevertheless, I contend that it has not been researched in sufficient depth in the setting of a public partnership board where the theory of the PSE is inadequately developed. This study uses values from the work of Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) and Plant (2003) to test their coherence in a multi-agency board.

Research aims and questions

The overarching aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between multi-agency partnership working and the PSE in a multi-agency board. The research questions are:

- What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?
- What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?

- In addition to the ‘traditional’ values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important by board participants?

Chapter Three

The Context

Introduction

This chapter describes the context for the study. The primary focus is on policy and partnerships related to ECM (Every Child Matters) (DfES, 2003) and its application to the field of disabled children. The chapter starts by clarifying terminology, followed by a discussion of the policy background for children, including disabled children. Theories and research on partnership working are then reviewed including studies on strategic boards relevant to my study.

Describing partnership working

Research and literature on partnership working originates from a variety of disciplines (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 11). Defining collaboration is complex because of the numerous descriptions used including partnership, network, alliance

and co-ordination (Huxham, 1996: 7). This section briefly sets out the key definitions used in the dissertation.

Partnership

Partnership is the broader concept underpinning this research. The government document *Partnership in Action* is considered as the initial inspiration for contemporary partnership working, noting a need to ‘...cut across organisational boundaries to provide better integrated services for local people’ (DH, 1998: 10). Hudson sees partnership working incorporating different types of collaboration including mutual co-operation, ‘incentive based’ partnership working, and partners directed to work together by government (Hudson, 1987). Partnerships may have problems integrating policies from the organisations involved, as well as implementing the agreed actions (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 4-7). A further term for partnership working is collaboration as ‘...a very positive form of working in association with others for some sort of mutual benefit’ (Huxham, 1996: 1).

Multi-disciplinary work

Multi-disciplinary work suggests professional collaboration. Characteristics associated with professional disciplines are skills grounded in theoretical knowledge; training and education; measuring competence; closure of the profession by restrictive organisation; codes of conduct and being altruistic on behalf of others (Millerson, 1964: 4-5). In addition to specialist learning, Hudson highlights the characteristics of independence and status (Hudson, 2007).

However, in collaboration these professional boundaries may be challenged. For example, instead of working to individual priorities, Frost sees multidisciplinary work for the teams and agencies involved comprising of co-operation, collaboration, co-ordination, as well as merger and integration (Frost, 2005: 13-16). Although multidisciplinary working typically refers to front line working, it also applies to professionals working on strategic boards.

Networks

The third term, networks, suggests a less formal approach to multi-agency working, for instance outside of, and around, the case study board rather than within it. Pertinent to how partnership board strategy is managed outside of formal agendas, networks refer to informal relationships based on trust and reciprocity transcending organisational boundaries and interests (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 4). De Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof note that government organisations can have the characteristics of a network (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 2008: 1). Relationships may exhibit high flexibility on a specific policy, or service issue, continuing as long as the need to sustain relationships exists and network members wish to continue it.

Strategic multi-agency working

As well as multi-disciplinary work involving front line practitioners, strategic multi-agency working is a key feature of public sector organisations. Such partnerships include boards as a key method of planning within the wider strategic environment (Cornforth, 2003; Glasby and Peck, 2004). As well as focusing on service provision the strategic element also links to local and national governance structures.

Partnerships: the wider policy context

The previous two decades have seen local government increasingly working alongside other agencies, with multi-agency partnerships growing in prominence for service delivery (Bochel and Bochel, 2004: 132; Frost et al., 2005: 188). For government the focus on partnership working aims to bridge the difficulties associated with organisational boundaries (DH, 1998; 2003); the use of resources (DH, 2007); and improved user outcomes (DfES, 2003; CLG, 2007). Snape and Taylor describe partnerships as the ‘most appropriate means of addressing successfully those endemic social ills of society: low educational standards, social exclusion, poor health and poverty’. They suggest that single agencies are unable to manage these deep-rooted problems and require collaborative solutions (Snape and Taylor, 2004: 1).

Children and young people: policy context

The Children Act 1989 placed a specific duty on local authorities and health bodies to co-operate in the interests of children in need. ‘Joined-up’ policy making in

children's services increased in importance in the late 1990s with the election of the New Labour Government. An improvement in the effectiveness of public services was sought focusing on the needs of children and families particularly within the spheres of health, social services, criminal justice and education (Frost et al., 2005: 188). In 1998 the Department of Health launched the *Quality Protects* programme for improving the management and delivery of children's services. Objectives included focusing on child protection and children in care, while for disabled children improvements included increasing support services, inclusion in mainstream activities, better information and improvements in service co-ordination (DH, 2000).

In 2003 the New Labour Government introduced *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (ECM), a policy framework underpinning coordinated services for children (DfES, 2003). Five outcomes were introduced: 'being healthy', 'staying safe', 'enjoying and achieving', 'making a positive contribution' and 'achieving economic well-being' (DfES, 2003: 14). Receiving little critique from policy makers, ECM was quickly accepted as the common sense approach to define children's needs, focusing on 'visible' symptoms, such as obesity or drug use, over wider structural inequalities (Hoyle, 2008: 10). Although questions were initially asked about the meaning of these outcomes, local strategy largely assimilated it into the 'Every Child Matters brand' (Hoyle, 2008: 2). For staff this ranged over a 'spectrum of responses' from unthinking compliance to attempting to do the right thing by 'tailoring outcomes to reporting regimes' (Seddon, 2008: 191).

As the predominant policy for children in England, Hudson argues top down central government implementation of ECM policy was the main strategic focus - the 'epitome of rational decision making, with everything flowing from an outcomes-led approach' (Hudson, 2006: 227). With ECM, central government largely delegated accountability to localities without engaging in national solutions to tackle structural and systemic issues (Hoyle, 2008: 14). ECM became a 'mind numbing plethora of activities and targets' requiring evidence to meet inspectorial requirements (Seddon, 2008: 190). This could lead to *not* every child mattering, as those not fitting into the model could be overlooked (Seddon, 2008: 191).

The Children Act 2004 enacted ECM with local authorities holding responsibility for fostering co-operation between agencies to improve children's well-being. The concept of Children's Trusts (DfES, 2005) was promoted in children's services as reflective of a 'Care Trust' in adult services. Legislation included establishing databases of children's information, Local Safeguarding Boards, local authorities publishing Children and Young People's Plans, the post of Director of Children's Services, and lead councillors.

Different varieties of Children's Trusts were seen, usually involving local authority education and children's social care functions (Hawker, 2005: 22). Such 'integration' was problematic, because of incompatibilities between the professions of social work and teaching, as well as their distinct bureaucracies. Inconsistencies between local authorities implementing 'Children's Trust boards' were noted (DCSF, 2008: 19). Children's Trust partners included councils, the police, probation, youth offending, health, Connexions, and the Learning and Skills Council. Children's Trust involvement was later extended to maintained schools, academies, further education providers and Job Centre Plus (DCSF, 2008: 32).

Disabled children and young people: policy context

Although the rhetoric advocated *every* child matters, this was questioned by those representing disabled children for whom the original aspirations of ECM were thought weak (EDCM, 2006). A campaign called *Every Disabled Child Matters* (EDCM) petitioned local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to 'sign up' to minimum levels of service provision. This included publishing local charters of key priorities. Although laudable, it remains questionable to what degree this strengthened the strategic focus on disabled children.

Local authorities attempted to integrate planning for disabled children into broader processes including Children and Young People's Plans (DfES, 2005). An academic review of plans saw variations in the discussion of specific 'needs' groups including limited references to disabled children (EDCM, 2006; NFER, 2007).

However, the government renewed a commitment to disabled children in the *Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures* (DCSF, 2007). This was superseded by

what was the most significant policy approach to improve services for disabled children, *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families* (AHDC). Aiming High aspired to ‘improve the outcomes of disabled children and young people and their families’ (DfES, 2007: 9). Proposals were based on ‘access and empowerment, responsive services and timely support, and improving quality and capacity’ (DfES, 2007: 5-7). ADHC provided financial grants to local authorities and PCTs with a ‘core offer’ detailing the expectations required for future service delivery (DfES, 2007: 16-17).

Other guidance on the duty to co-operate saw little reference to disabled children (DCSF, 2008). AHDC prompted improvements in strategic governance by improving links to senior officers, directors and councillors. PCTs were also expected to demonstrate connections to senior management (DCSF, 2008: 7). Local authorities were expected to work in partnership with children, young people and parents when developing services (TDC, 2011). However, although such links may exist, this does not necessarily lead to improvements in services. It seemed critical for those providing disabled children’s services to have a clear mandate from higher officers to implement plans. Nonetheless, as priorities included child protection, youth unemployment and youth offending there was a risk that the needs of disabled children could be overlooked.

It is impossible to split strategy for disabled children from Local Strategic Partnerships (CLG, 2006), Local Area Agreements and strategic commissioning. These were described as the mechanism between central government and localities, devolving governance and prioritising resources (CLG, 2008: 34). Although Local Area Agreements were seen as an opportunity to strengthen local priority setting, greater national uniformity and control was undoubtedly a significant feature too (Fuller, 2008).

Connected to a study of the PSE and partnership working, strategic commissioning is now prevalent within local government and multi-agency planning (Glasby, 2012). Strategic commissioning is described as ‘...the set of activities, which enable commissioners to make decisions about how best to use the total resources available in order to improve outcomes’ (DCSF Regional Support programme document,

2009). It requires 'coordinated planning and commissioning to ensure best use of finite resources across health, social services and education boundaries' (DfES, 2007: 9). With the call to use a varied provision of services in creative ways, strategic commissioning may potentially challenge conventional understandings of the PSE.

In relation to services for disabled children, commissioning advice from the government set out the need to ensure a 'level playing field between public, private and voluntary sector provision' (DfES, 2007: 49). Managing the market for short breaks was 'actively seeking out and working with private, statutory and voluntary providers to develop short break services which families need and want' (TDC, 2009: 7). The time limited nature of funding might not have appealed to those requiring a longer commitment, but remained business as usual for voluntary agencies accessing small grants, dependent on writing bids and managing the risks involved.

The interplay between improving services and diversifying markets suggests a dual purpose. One reading is the best use of available resources to 'demonstrably improve outcomes and narrow gaps' for disabled children (TDC, 2009: 5). Because of the moral underpinning found in the language of the 'best interests of children' it has, however, been difficult for policy makers to work outside of ECM policy discourse. Additionally, strategic commissioning to some degree resembles discussions on the PSE and contracting-out services (Grimshaw et al., 2002; Hebson et al., 2003). Policy advice may be easily given, but for AHDC no evidence is available on what proportion of the short breaks grant was spent in which section of the welfare market. Different reasons undoubtedly account for this, such as a limited availability of specific specialist provision outside of public services. It is also unclear to what degree officer commitment to traditional conceptions of public service delivery influences the choice of public provision in other sectors, or if local political parties influence procurement decisions.

Partnership working

This section examines selected definitions and research on partnership working to inform the dissertation, including work on strategic public boards. Work that has

focused on front line practice can be usefully applied to strategic managers and policy staff, such as those on my case study board.

Partnership working informs this case study, with work on multi-disciplinary front line working having relevance to a strategic board. For example, Frost defines 'multidisciplinary work' as a hierarchy of terms. *Co-operation* sees services working together to complement each other but maintaining their independence. *Collaboration* refers to services planning together to address duplication and gaps in provision to achieve shared outcomes. More coordinated than co-operation, it is found in teams involving different professions such as youth offending teams with aspirations to improve services jointly rather than in isolation. *Co-ordination* sees services working together systematically to share and agree goals, an approach thought more effective than co-operation and collaboration. Lastly, *merger and integration* signifies a move from a partnership approach to working together within a single team or organisation (Frost, 2005: 13-16).

Focusing on co-ordination and collaboration Hudson proposed three strategies linked to mutual agreements, incentive strategies based on 'bribes' to foster joint working, and authoritative strategies where agencies or individuals are instructed to collaborate (Hudson, 1987; Means et al., 2008: 114).

Huxham provides five rationales for describing the 'collaborative advantage' of organisations working together. Firstly, *empowerment and participation* discusses the relationship between the ideological and instrumental in collaboration, that is to say the distinction between self-interest and moral value, as well as collaboration being not only inter-organisational but a partnership with the community. Her second rationale, *power relationships*, is concerned with how weaker partners may be empowered by collaboration. Empowering weaker partners, by involving them in collaboration, can increase a host organisation's ability to achieve its aims in coalition thus becoming powerful in relation to other participants. Thirdly, *addressing conflict* describes the resolving of conflict by collaborating to progress a shared vision. The fourth rationale, *substantive change*, suggests that most common conceptions of collaboration focus, at least initially, on achieving substantive ends with collaboration instrumental to implementing change or agreeing a shared vision.

The final rationale, *ambitiousness*, relates to exchanging information and using joint agreements to resolve conflict and enhance capacity (Huxham, 1996: 8-13).

Sullivan and Skelcher state collaboration originates from contracts, partnerships and networks (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002:4). *Contracts* are most closely allied to the delivery of public services by non-state bodies, such as the voluntary sector, having some relevance to my case study. However, partnerships and networks have greater significance to my case study. *Networks* pertain to informal relationships based on trust and reciprocity which are frequently based on individual relationships transcending organisational boundaries and interests. Sullivan and Skelcher note the most common example of collaboration is *partnership*, a term which is far harder to define. Part of the problem of defining partnerships originates from the fragmentary nature of implementing policy. Here, partners share responsibility to assess the need for action, the type of actions required, and agreeing how to implement them (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 4-7).

Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) identify three perspectives informing collaboration. The *optimist* perspective describes collaboration leading to positive outcomes, improvements and benefits for partners over individual gain. The *pessimist* perspective notes that partners preserve or enhance their power, placing personal or organisational gain above that of partners. Lastly, a *realist* perspective argues that altruism and individual gain are both present in partnership working (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 37-41).

Hudson (2007) sees pessimistic and optimistic perspectives in multi-agency working. The pessimistic model highlighted six dimensions: 'distinctiveness and differentiation' obstructing multidisciplinary work, featuring trait, knowledge, status, power, accountability and culture. A commitment to an optimistic model of multi-agency working was identified, promoting collaboration among practitioners. The optimistic model saw common values, including accountability, learning, location, culture and what he calls 'case', that is to say the specific worksite (Hudson, 2007: 5-7). Shared learning was observed in a change from 'old' to 'new' professionalism. Old professionalism focused on knowledge, unilateral decision making, service users being dependent, colleagues as deferential, autonomy and self-management,

individual accountability, detachment and inter-changeability of practitioners. New professionalism included reflective practice, interdependent decision processes, patients being empowered, working alongside colleagues, supported practice, collective responsibility, engagement, and specificity of practitioner's strengths. Overall new professionalism was found to be more favourable to inter-professional working (Hudson, 2007: 6-7).

Williams (2002) identified individual 'boundary spanners' using their skills and experience to enhance interpersonal relationships within policy processes. They might co-ordinate a task agreed in a hierarchical network, such as a strategic board, by convening professionals from different institutions. For instance, a boundary spanner might facilitate a meeting on a particular issue, such as leisure centre staff meeting with social care staff to discuss disabled access. They may establish 'individualistic networks' driven by stakeholders' need to resolve a pressing issue by meeting on a focused task, such as producing a multi-agency protocol.

Research on partnership working

Research on partnership working informs my case study. This not only includes work on multi-agency boards, but, additionally, multi-disciplinary front line working with findings that can be applied to a board. For example, Frost et al. (2005), studied social workers in several multi-disciplinary teams, including a youth crime team, a team working with young people with emotional issues, health-based teams and a special needs nursery team. As well as social workers, the youth crime team included probation officers and police, leading to challenges for professional identity and knowledge. It was noted different professions held different 'core professional models', such as a social worker's focus on the social and family context, in contrast with the law-related professions' focus on the victim (Frost et al., 2005: 189). However, there was evidence of opportunities for the different professionals to influence each other's beliefs and practices as they debated and shared practice (Frost et al., 2005: 190).

Frost et al. investigated how knowledge is created through *participation* by practitioners, as well as *reification* with knowledge and rules represented as

documents and artefacts (Frost et al., 2005: 189). It was noted that conflict is inevitable when activities are reviewed and where debate is required to identify solutions (Frost et al., 2005; 187). Issues arising linked to *professional practice* and the range of knowledge and practice models applied; *status and power*, with power in multi-agency teams not always equally distributed among professionals; *confidentiality and information sharing* saw differences in how information on service users was shared; and *relations with external agencies* identified different procedures among agencies, such as closing cases earlier.

Applying the theory of optimistic and pessimistic models of partnership working discussed previously, Hudson (2007) investigated partnership working with general practitioners, nurses and social workers. He argued research into *inter-organisational* working has not been matched by work on *inter-professional* relations. Opportunities to resist bureaucratic rules may be less in professions whose identity is weaker, compared to those with an established working model of independence. Both social workers and nurses raised concerns about the flexibility of each other's professions to undertake tasks outside their professional remits. Being protective of their own profession was witnessed within intra-professional groupings. Concerns about professional status were more prominent when different professions were required to work in teams, although the benefits of team working were appreciated. Lastly, inter-professional working and the changes it creates could be seen as a threat to professional discretion and accountability.

Atkinson et al. (2002) researched multi-agency working between education, social care and health. Different types of activity were identified which were mainly operational or training focused. The rationale for and development of multi-agency working pointed to improving services, user outcomes and professional collaboration. Professional and organisational involvement was found in a variety of experiences, with different motivations and constraints identified. 'Roles and responsibilities' were identified, specifying the skills, expertise and personal qualities required to engage in multi-agency working. 'Impact' signified improving services, outcomes and prevention through multi-agency working. Less successful aspects were financing collaborative activity, the pressure of work and competing demands on professionals. The challenges were numerous, including resources, roles and

responsibilities, competing priorities, communication and different working cultures identified. Lastly, key factors and skills for multi-agency working were wide-ranging, including setting up of systems and procedures, communication, resources and agreeing aims.

Fenwick et al. (2012) studied two local government partnerships and their bureaucracies, applying four theses of governance adapted from Rhodes' (2000). The first thesis, '*governance involves state and non-state actors in a network caused by a need to exchange resources and negotiate shared purpose*' saw networks as self-organising with the partnerships emerging from the local authorities' commitment to local improvement. The partnerships involved public bodies, principally local authorities and the NHS, as well as the voluntary sector. Co-governance between partnership members was found, but only for service delivery planning, limited to sharing plans and aligning services. A partial exchange of resources took place. In sum, co-governance emerged through a wish to share purpose over legislation or policy.

The second thesis, '*governance networks are characterised by interdependence between organisations*' considers relationships between partnership members. The local authorities had a dominant role in shaping policy and strategy. However, concerns about different accountabilities were noted, with suggestions that central government was accountable for policy but localities for service delivery. Formal accountability to council cabinets was identified, with partnerships responsible to councillors. Furthermore, public organisations have to account for performance through audits, being answerable to local and national levels. Internal accountability in the partnerships was identified, but traditional bureaucratic procedures remained for the organisations involved. Being accountable to their own bureaucratic arrangements, the public bodies influenced the shape of co-governance rather than being equal partners. This led to 'asymmetrical' relationships existing, rather than genuine interdependence.

The third thesis, 'governance interactions are game-like, rooted in trust' saw accountability and reporting mechanisms based on trust built up over time. Internal accountability within the partnerships, as well as accountability to the 'centre', was

found. Partners brought their own organisation's accountability requirements there, in contrast with those required for co-governance. Trust was found to be built on 'game-like' interactions within the partnerships. Although internal partnership accountability was observed, this was located within a vertical accountability to local and national levels with trust bound up with these interactions

Lastly, thesis 4 '*governance networks have a significant degree of autonomy and are not accountable to the state, but self-organising*' saw co-governance taking place but with public bodies accountable to government. Voluntary sector organisations represented in the partnerships were found to be accountable to their own governing bodies. Policies which informed the partnerships, for example LAAs (CLG, 2007), saw a hierarchical accountability to government. As with the third thesis, asymmetrical relationships were noted with public organisations dominant in the partnerships. These were typically local authorities and health organisations with the largest budgets, who led on key policy areas. Their dominance at the partnerships was strengthened not only by how they were regulated as organisations, but also through traditional bureaucratic processes linked to political leadership and vertical accountability.

In conclusion, Fenwick et al. found that government's role in public policy and service delivery has not declined, but has extended by way of governance found in networks, partnerships and co-governance and co-production. The case studies did not observe a growth in self-governance, but an extension of bureaucracy and bureaucratic controls into partnerships that Fenwick et al. call 'meta-bureaucracy' (Fenwick et al., 2012: 417).

Strategic boards

In addition to theory and research on partnership working, a study of the PSE and partnership working can be informed by research on strategic boards, including multi-agency boards. The rarity of empirical research on the strategic functions of such boards has been noted, as well as the tensions that arise within them (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003: 77).

Central to local governance and policy making, public partnership boards provide a crucial function for planning services. Boards exist to develop vision, governance and strategy (DCSF, 2008: 8), achieving ‘decisional coherence’ by engaging members in deliberation and conflict (Glasby and Peck, 2004: 5). They may manage a range of issues that do not always fit neatly together (Cornforth, 2003). Boards have a role in directing policy (Dudau, 2009) as well as social and symbolic roles to preserve organisational cohesion (Glasby and Peck, 2004: 6).

It is apparent public boards play a central role in local governance, but this does not necessarily mean the reason for their existence is always clear to outside observers, or even the board members. Linked to the PSE, and examined later on in this dissertation, terms of reference can imply how a board works to the public interest, such as detailing its plans to improve children’s well-being. Boards may promote social justice by implementing legislation, promoting social inclusion, or challenging prejudice by promoting equality as an agenda item.

Cornforth suggests six theories to assist our understanding of boards (Cornforth, 2003: 7-11). Although his theories focus on non-profit organisations, they are applicable to multi-agency public boards and help to explain how a shared ethos of the public is manifested there. Firstly, *agency theory* suggests a board’s role is to ensure compliance, with an assumption that the ‘owners’ of an enterprise and its managers have different interests. Examples for a public board are the wider strategic objectives of senior managers overseeing it, contrasted with those managers who attend with a specific focus on their own services. Secondly, *stewardship theory* sees shared interests between senior management and board members, with no differences in objectives. Thirdly, a *democratic perspective* identifies a political angle, with outside representatives being involved in the board. This can lead to conflict when attendees have different interests, such as an elected councillor and another board member having different views on priorities (Peck and Dickinson, 2008: 64). Fourthly, *stakeholder theory* sees boards balancing and incorporating different views, responding to a broader interest than just one stakeholder group. This is similar to previous work on the PSE with public servants described as extending an interest beyond their organisation or profession for the ‘public good’ (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641). This may be by agreeing a shared vision for the board or

ensuring the most appropriate people attend it. Cornforth's fifth theory, *resource dependency*, sees a board's role as one of 'boundary spanning' to import resources and information into it. This is because its survival can depend on the resources of other organisations, for example by creating links with their managers to augment board plans. Lastly, *managerial hegemony theory* states boards have a symbolic role, providing legitimacy for managerial actions with a 'rubber stamping' function. In summarising these theories, Cornforth provides a 'paradox' perspective, to help manage the multiple meanings found in boards by 'embracing and exploring tensions and differences rather than choosing between them' (Cornforth, 2003: 11). This is useful in assisting public boards who believe there are ways to integrate different agency or professional perspectives for the public interest.

Dudau (2009) investigated leadership in a multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children's Board, discussing difficulties for public organisations managing leadership in inter-organisational and inter-professional settings. She described that the function of multi-agency boards is to take the initiative and responsibility to think and act creatively outside of traditional accountability lines across varying organisations and sectors. Leadership literature has described people *in organisations* and Dudau emphasised the importance of the leadership capacities *of organisations*, as well as inter-organisational collaborative *processes*. However, research on corporate governance has identified that as the chairs of such boards do not manage all of the partners, they will not have the authority to direct them (Parston and Steele, 2003).

A 'dramaturgical framework' is useful to consider how the PSE is symbolically manifested within a strategic board, namely '...the performative dimension of governance through consideration of the setting(s) in which deliberation takes place and the norms expressed during the process' (Freeman and Peck, 2007: 912). Dramaturgy may be observed by board participants communicating their aspirations to achieve outcomes in a document, or by confirming their faith in a board to improve outcomes. For Freeman and Peck, boards were defined as 'arenas of action' using rules, partners' resources, as well as being a venue in which to search for shared meaning. Agendas were noted as sequencing events and practices (Freeman

and Peck, 2007: 916), similar to Cornforth's *managerial hegemony* theory above, with its symbolic role to provide legitimacy for managerial actions.

Other issues informing the PSE and partnership boards arise from research into the strategic contribution of boards in voluntary and public sector organisations (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003). Associated with the focus in this dissertation on PSE values, a relationship between boards, accountability and governance was identified. A blurring of discussions on operational and strategic issues in boards was noted, as well as differences in how policy and strategy was defined. This suggested that the type, extent and quality of boards' strategic contribution varied. The 'conformance' and 'performance' roles of boards were identified in relation to whether a board follows a detailed policy such as one set by government, or is allowed more creativity. A range of 'context', 'input' and 'process' factors influencing board output were identified (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003: 79). A further finding suggested that senior boards could improve strategic value by holding 'away days', in contrast to only meeting in a formal board setting (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003: 95). Lastly, it was suggested that accountability had been improved at a board by involving parents there. This identified how accountability extended wider than just organisations and professionals (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003: 86), and links to Cornforth's description of the *democratic perspective* with outside representatives, such as parents, attending a board.

Nonetheless although citizens, such as parents, attend boards, attention is needed to ensure they participate as fully as possible. For example, it was found in a study of parents attending a school governing board that they participated at a lower strategic level than the head teacher and other staff who had a greater influence (Farrell, 2005). Parent carers and disabled children can have less influence on board strategy and there is a risk that a strategic 'core' and 'periphery' among members may arise.

Summary

The overarching aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between multi-agency partnership working and the PSE, with a partnership board used as the vehicle to investigate the PSE. This chapter considered the policy context for the research, as well as theoretical and empirical work on partnership working. The final

discussion focused on strategic boards as the setting for the chosen case study. This illuminated the complexity found in such boards, requiring exploration in the fieldwork.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters considered the theoretical and empirical context to my research and inform the fieldwork which explores how officers involved in children's multi-agency partnership working understand the PSE. This chapter discusses the research methodology which follows a case study approach (Yin, 2003) underpinned by documentary analysis, one board observation and semi-structured interviews. This chapter considers all aspects of the project from the rationale for the design to reflections on the research process.

Research aims and questions

The overarching aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between partnership working and the PSE in a multi-agency board. The research questions are:

- What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?
- What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?
- In addition to the 'traditional' values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important by board participants?

Rationale and origins of the research

The study originated in my occupation as a local government officer with a substantial role in multi-agency partnership working. I had frequently reflected upon the relationship between government policy, its application at a local level, as well as the link to individual officers and their values. Such perspectives offered the opportunity to investigate the PSE in a collaborative setting.

Qualitative research

For this dissertation I chose qualitative research to facilitate discussions on beliefs and values. Qualitative methods refers to a broad range of techniques including interviews, focus groups and participant observation to understand the experiences and practices of a sample located in their own social context (Devine, 2002: 197). Rather than focusing on cause, effect and prediction, usually the terrain of quantitative research, qualitative methods predominantly focus on participant centred meaning and explanation. Phenomena are studied in their natural settings with attempts to make sense of, and interpret, findings located in participant meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3).

Qualitative perspectives are often promoted as an alternative to quantitative methods, requiring other understandings of social knowledge, meaning and reality with the subject matter no longer objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted (Kvale, 1996: 11). Researchers need to consider methodological and epistemological assumptions carefully when generating research questions. Taking a qualitative approach, for example semi-structured interviews and focus groups, is frequently seen only as selected methods for collecting data, devoid of any philosophical context. However, qualitative approaches challenge authoritative and powerful models of 'scientific method', raising epistemological issues about the nature of knowledge (Packer, 2011).

Case study research

This dissertation used a case study approach with an in-depth investigation of a single partnership board, to enhance understanding of the relationship between partnership working and the PSE. Case study research is useful for policy research, often used to evaluate national and local policy implementation, as well as applied academically in organisation studies, management and the social sciences (Yin, 2003: 1-2).

The case study is an empirical inquiry that usually investigates contemporary phenomena within a 'real life' setting, drawing on a number of sources of evidence to problematise and deepen understanding. Defining the limits of a study can be challenging, with studies differing in the number of cases examined and how and if

they are compared; levels of detail and the size of cases; the wider societal or historic context of the subject matter; and how researchers limit themselves to description and explanation, or engage in evaluation and prescription (Dopson, 2003: 218).

Exploring the contribution of the case study method, Dopson noted that accessing case sites, sharing draft findings and anonymity need careful consideration. Additionally, case studies may be informed by 'layered' national, local, organisational and individual contexts. Such complexity needs to be considered when using the case study method to enhance understanding of relationships between groups and processes (Dopson, 2003).

Case studies are often based on qualitative methods, but can equally incorporate quantitative methods (Yin, 2003: 14-15). Their unique strength is to use a variety of evidence including documents, interviews and observations, as well as other artifacts if needed (Yin, 2003: 85-97). They capture a substantial amount of data on the *specific* rather than the *general* (Gray, 2004: 123). Although widely used, this does not mean that a shared understanding of them exists, with the term case study not applied in a standard way (Dopson, 2003: 218). For example, not always clearly articulated in the research literature is what constitutes a 'case' or a 'unit of analysis'. In this study the case or unit is bounded by the constitution of the board.

Methods for data gathering

There are a range of methods that have been used to research the PSE including documentary analysis, observations, semi-structured interviews and surveys (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Lawton, 2008). More recently it has been suggested that discourse analysis may be appropriate for researching the PSE to interpret knowledge withing professional discourses (Spencer et al., 2003; Lawton, 2008). However, for the purposes of this small scale study it was decided to combine documentary analysis, observation and interviews. Semi-structured interviews with board members provided the main method of data collection. This style of interview was thought the most appropriate means to explore perceptions of the PSE, providing

an opportunity for both collecting specific information (biographical data) as well as more in depth experiential data.

Documentary analysis

Reviewing documents produced by the board helped to prepare for the observation and interviews. Texts chosen for documentary analysis can include organisational files, reports, minutes, management information, memos and email messages (Gray, 2004: 267). Scott notes issues useful for studying documents: *authenticity* and whether evidence is genuine and of unquestionable origin; *credibility* on the extent to which evidence is free from error, exaggeration or distortion; *representativeness* whether the evidence is similar or typical of its genre and, if not, the extent of its typicality; and *meaning* on understanding the document and how it communicates its aims (Scott, 1990: 6-8). The role of the researcher is not to criticise or assess texts in terms of 'objective standards' but to consider how they achieve particular effects, identifying the elements used and their function (Silverman, 2001: 121-22). Reviewing documents does not necessarily need to be about honesty or accuracy, but how they represent a social reality in a particular story or narrative (Atkinson and Coffey, 1996: 55).

Partnership texts, including terms of reference and strategies, were analysed to consider whether the PSE was manifested within them. This was carried out by identifying statements associated with partnership working and the PSE. These statements were recorded and used for the section on board documentation in chapter 6. Documentary analysis assisted in refining the interview questions, with documents assisting understanding of how partners co-operate. Additionally, for the PSE, analysing the documents could reveal how specific 'spheres of action' are prioritised (Silverman, 2001:125), for example how government policy is interpreted at a local level.

Non-participant observation

Observation is a mainstream method of enquiry in social science (Bowling 2002: 356), originating in social and ethnographic anthropology and developed further by the 'Chicago School' in the USA (Gray, 2004: 241). As a method, observations

enable the researcher to get close to a group of individuals, such as the sample chosen for this dissertation.

Although observations appear to be just watching something and noting down the 'facts' that present themselves without any theoretical considerations. Using the method is a lot more complex than this and involves interpreting the whole environment (Gray, 2004: 238). This may not just be to record the spoken word but noting where people sit, what clothes they are wearing, how they interact, as well as issues such as gender, race and disability (Mack et al., 2005: 20).

In participant observation the researcher takes part in the situation being studied rather than simply acting as a 'researcher' (Bowling, 2002: 359). This can be in a covert way, such as by secretly joining a sub-group or working in an organisation, or overtly where participation takes place by the researcher clarifying or discussing issues prior to the observation. The approach I took was overt non-participant observation where I viewed board activity but did not participate in the meeting.

A drawback of observation is that interpreting what is observed has the risk of being influenced by the beliefs of the researcher (Gray, 2004: 239). For example, a situation recorded as conflictual or dysfunctional may be part of the normal functioning of the group. Furthermore, the 'Hawthorne effect' (Bowling, 2002: 219-21) suggests individual and group behaviours can be altered or influenced because a sample is aware they are being observed. Therefore, a steering group that is normally combative might present as co-operative in front of the researcher and not exhibiting their normal interactions. Observation may highlight unethical practices including abusive or fraudulent behaviour, and the participant observer needs to consider an ethical strategy to manage this.

Interviews

Interviews have a strong claim to be the most commonly used research method with a wide number of approaches available (Fielding and Thomas, 2001: 123; Payne and Payne, 2004: 129). There is no commonly agreed process with interviewing described as a craft and an art, as well as a social scientific method (Kvale, 1996: 13). In structured interviews the wording and order of questions remain identical in

each interview. In semi-structured interviews the main questions are asked, but flexibility exists about the order in which questions can be asked, or whether more probing is required. The unstructured approach is usually guided by a list of topics, but is free to investigate themes in the manner best suited to obtain information. In essence, unstructured interviews are less formal, corresponding to the type of conversations customary in social life (Fielding and Thomas, 2001: 124).

Semi-structured interviews were used in this dissertation to collect data, consistent with a case study approach (Yin, 2003: 89-90). The interviews required a clear focus in the fieldwork to ensure they were not so flexible that they failed to gather useful information. The interview schedule attached in Appendix 1 was informed by the documentary analysis and the board observation. It reflects the substantive research questions and themes discussed in the literature review.

There is potential for the interviewer to influence the responses of research participants (Fielding and Thomas, 2001: 133) linked to power, researcher positionality, as well as ethnicity, gender, class, disability, age and sexuality. These factors need to be reflected on by the researcher, especially where there are sensitive issues relating to the investigation. Researcher positionality additionally refers to the researcher's status and professional standing and how this enhances access to a sample, a situation that benefited me when identifying my research site. Regarding my own positionality as an experienced professional I did not expect to feel anxious or be affected by the power dynamics involved in interviewing senior managers. Nevertheless, in terms of interviewing senior staff my relationships with them, as well as working to their time constraints, had to be professionally managed. There are legitimate reasons why senior managers may not wish to be involved and researchers need to be mindful of this (Fielding, 2004: 250). A key benefit of qualitative research and unstructured interviews is the flexibility to take account of these subtleties.

Rationale for choice of case study and sample

Researching partnership boards can provide a rich source of data, either of one board or when comparing several case study boards. My case study was a multi-agency disabled children's strategic partnership board. Stakeholders represented on the

board included representatives of the local authority including social care and education functions, health representatives, early years providers, Connexions and the voluntary sector. As the voluntary sector and parents attended the board they were included in the sample. The case study was appropriate for this dissertation because:

- by applying the research questions to the case it was anticipated a significant amount of quality data would be collected; this enhanced and challenged my understanding of partnership working and deepen the analysis;
- the policies of ECM, EDCM and the Children Act 2004 enabled contextualisation of the research within a national policy framework;
- partnership values arising from the policy context, in tandem with the research questions, offered a wide number of variables for collecting data and analysing the findings; and
- it was anticipated that the preferred location for the research (Midland City) would provide rich data because of its size and complexity.

With reference to accessing the board and the sample, I was experienced in working in multi-agency boards and was confident about approaching the chairs and officers who led them. To initiate the fieldwork stage several English local authorities were approached informally, to establish if they had a partnership board on disabled children. After confirming Midland City were interested in participating in the research, a letter was sent to the board chair (Appendix 2) followed by attendance at a board meeting to present my proposal. A decision was taken at the board that I attended for me to proceed with my research. Letters were then sent to board members (Appendix 3) and meeting times agreed for the interviews. The participant information sheet (Appendix 4) and consent form (Appendix 5) were given to participants to ensure they were informed about the research.

Coding of data and data analysis

Framework analysis informed how the interview data was analysed. This is an approach used to classify and organise data according to key themes and concepts

enabling emergent categories to be taken into consideration (Ritchie et al., 2003: 220). In that sense framework analysis combines both inductive and deductive analysis.

When coding data it is important to understand the difference between ‘a priori’ (deductive) and ‘emergent’ (inductive) approaches. My framework, using an Excel spread sheet, was mainly based on a priori theoretical concepts associated with the PSE and partnership working. These informed the design of the concepts and categories in it. However, new categories emerged during the analysis process.

On completing the interviews I read the transcripts, recording the issues that arose onto flip charts. These themes corresponded with the a priori themes, and the final concepts and categories were then transferred to the Excel spread sheet. Each interviewee was given an individual code (Appendix 6). I then read the interview transcripts for a second time, coding the text with numbers related to the concepts and categories identified with the coded parts of the transcripts cut and pasted into the relevant field. On completion, I transferred the concept and category into a word document, each column of data detailing all participant responses. These concepts and categories formed the structure for the first draft of my findings chapter. An extract from the Excel spread sheet is attached in Appendix 9.

In addition to the interview transcripts, fieldwork notes were made during observation. Before observing the board meeting, a number of issues were listed on a prompt sheet. In particular, I was interested in identifying statements and words that could be associated with the PSE and partnership working. Other prompts included describing the room; who attended, including roles, gender and ethnicity; who spoke, including who spoke as well as those who did not speak; how the process was managed; and finally how discussions and actions took place in the meeting, for example by ‘rubber stamping’ proposals which were easily agreed or discussing issues in more depth.

The observation field notes did not inform the final analysis, or the development of concepts and categories in the framework. The field notes helped me to familiarise myself with the board and its members and contributed to refining the interview

schedule. However, after completing the analysis it became apparent that the observation would usefully provide additional material to supplement the interview findings.

Validity

A key factor for qualitative research is 'validity', concerned with whether the data collected and analysed in the research demonstrates what it claims to show (Spicker, 2006: 84). A critique of qualitative research is that it is neither replicable nor compatible and one cannot make generalisations about findings (Devine, 2002: 204). Silverman notes that validity is another word for truth and a finding might be questioned if a researcher has made no attempt to deal with contrary cases or only presents data supporting their original suppositions. Qualitative researchers need to ensure they substantiate their data, responding to critiques which advocate qualitative approaches are too anecdotal and lack objectivity (Silverman, 2001:34).

Morse et al., argue that reliability and validity must be built into the qualitative research process. Strategies include researchers being responsive and flexible, that methods are transparent, samples are suitable for the task and provide theoretical saturation and replication, and an analytical stance between data and analysis exists (Morse et al., 2002: 5-6). Trustworthiness is usually concerned with 'post-hoc' evaluation with reviewers confirming the rigour with which a study was undertaken (Morse et al., 2002: 3). However, rigour is ensured by placing responsibility with the researcher rather than external reviewers after completion (Morse et al., 2002: 7).

Spicker sets out three ways researchers can verify qualitative material. Firstly, by being confident about the validity of the material and ensuring participants know about the issues being investigated; secondly, using cross-confirmation with existing research and evidence to generalise a problem rather than it just being specific to a particular study; and thirdly, with internal cross-confirmation, for example if several people repeat the same thing this shows evidence of a shared perception or experience (Spicker, 2006: 84).

When undertaking research, Thompson and Phua state an important issue is recognising 'social desirability bias', the phenomenon of respondents answering

questions that will be viewed favourably by the researcher. This is not only found in qualitative research but it is also possible in the completion of surveys and questionnaires by senior managers (Thompson and Phua, 2005: 541-44).

Certainly, as a researcher it is important that caution is exercised when making claims based on my data. In respect of the qualitative methods selected, it is acknowledged that participants may tend to ascribe purpose, values and integrity to their behaviour when interviewed in a formal situation. Although I have no reason to suspect the interviewees were not telling me the truth, I acknowledge that when investigating the PSE interviewees may report positive rather than negative behaviour associated with it.

Nevertheless, reflecting on the research process has helped me to understand the limitations. When carrying out qualitative research in the future, I would want to make my interview schedule shorter. This will allow for longer discussions on unique themes that arise requiring more in depth discussion. Also, I would want to consider a strategy to help me to assess the limitations of the validity of my data (Creswell, 2003). Lastly, I would want to check out the emerging findings with the sample by member checking (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), reflect more on my own bias, provide information running counter to established themes, and use external auditors to review my work (Creswell, 2003: 195-197).

Research ethics

This dissertation was informed by the principles of ethical research set out in the ESRC Research Ethics Framework (2010). Research ethics refers to the moral principles which guide research from the beginning of the project to completion and publication of results, as well as the archiving of data and sample materials (ESRC, 2010). Ethics underpin the conduct of research so that it is undertaken in a manner that ensures the physical, social and psychological well-being of participants will not be harmed (SRA, 2003).

There were a number of ethical issues which needed to be considered. The final choice for involvement remained with board members, with a letter initially being sent to the chair and then the other participants, setting out the ethical and

professional issues involved. The research was based on informed consent with a full explanation of the study given to them. In terms of analysing and writing up data it was imperative that anonymity and confidentiality are respected.

The research followed the guidelines set out in the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Policies and Procedures. Research ethics approval was sought from the School's Research Ethics Committee and a copy of the application is provided in the dissertation (Appendix 8). This approval was noted in the correspondence with the sample to ensure ethical approval complied with the research governance frameworks of the organisations involved.

Reflections on the research process

The research process raised no significant management or ethical issues. I had considered whether some board members might use their seniority or professional status to challenge the research process. This did not arise and I believe that my confidence gained from working in social work and in local government ensured I was not intimidated by status. My main reflections are on three issues. Firstly, several interviewees said that they had never had the opportunity to discuss values in relation to their work. This meant that in the interviews it was important to move the discussion on, rather than let them remain on one perspective for too long. Secondly, some participants were researchers themselves and asked questions about how I was going to analyse the data, what my early findings were (even though I had not finished all of the interviews), or whether the values detailed in my interview schedule were all 'values'. These questions were not asked to undermine me and I answered them as honestly as I was able to. Thirdly, on collecting and analysing my data, I started to realise that the subjective views of participants were a critical element of the research as they offered me new insights. My questions enabled participants to articulate issues, perhaps for the first time.

Summary

In considering the methodological and theoretical challenges faced in this research, the use of case study method was argued as providing the best approach to investigate the emerging relationship between the PSE and partnership working. The

selected methods were thought to be suited to the research questions, facilitating a theoretically informed investigation and allowing for flexibility. The research findings from the fieldwork are now discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter Five

Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one is largely descriptive, providing a background to the case study and research context. This includes a description of the board, an overview of documents and a brief account of an observation of a board meeting. Interview findings from participants about attending the board are referred to in part one. In part two, the main interview findings on the PSE and partnership working are reported, supplemented by the observation findings. These are organised under three headings: board members' understanding of the PSE, public service values and the board, and the PSE and the board - other suggested values.

Research aims and questions

The overarching aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between multi-agency partnership working and the PSE in a multi-agency board. The research questions are:

- What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?
- What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?
- In addition to the 'traditional' values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important by board participants?

Two boards are referred to in this chapter. The Midland City Disabled Children and Young People's Partnership board is called 'the board' and is the focus of this study. The second board is the Children's Trust to which the disabled children's board reports, referred to as such when cited.

Part one: introduction to the case study

Case study context

Midland City is a large city in England with a population of more than one million people. Its economy has experienced significant change in the past 30 years with the service sector largely replacing manufacturing as the main industry. In recent years the city centre has been regenerated, enhancing its commercial and cultural standing. However, the city has some of the most deprived areas in England, with high unemployment and poor health. The population is diverse with a third from black and minority ethnic communities (Audit Commission, 2009)

It is acknowledged that there is a lack of data, both nationally and locally, on the numbers of disabled children (DCSF/Thomas Coram Research Unit, 2008). Data suggest that of the child population in Midland City, there was a population of disabled children and young people of around 10,500 (*Midland City Integrated Strategy 2006-08*).

A multi-agency approach to planning services for disabled children takes place in the case study board hosted by the council in which local partners plan services. It meets on a bi-monthly basis and includes representatives from the council, health, schools, Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council and parents. The board works within the local strategic context, including the Children and Young People's Plan and the Integrated Strategy for Disabled Children. Groups reporting to the board have responsibility for commissioning services, information, assessment, performance, participation, and workforce and training

Both the board and the integrated strategy for disabled children were reviewed in late 2009, with the board renamed the Disabled Children's Partnership Group. As these changes took place towards the end of my fieldwork, the dissertation is set within the strategic environment when contact with the board was initiated in early 2009.

Board documentation

Documents informing the work of the board were read including reports, agendas and minutes, but it would have been too ambitious to discuss all of them in detail.

Several strategic documents were found to inform the research closely, namely the *Terms of Reference for Midland City Disabled Children's Partnership Board (2007)*; *the Midland City Integrated Strategy for Improving the Lives of Disabled Children (2006-08)*; *Midland City's Children and Young People's Plan (2008-11)*; and *Midland City Short Breaks Strategy (2009-11)*. These documents were analysed to identify statements connected to collaborative working and the PSE. They are detailed in the references.

References to partnership, inter-agency, multi-agency, integrated and joint working were made in the documents. However, terms were used interchangeably with little consideration of their meaning. For partnership working 'multi-agency' typically referred to processes and people, demonstrated by the quote:

'We want to see coordinated multi-agency assessments leading to prompt, responsive and high quality interventions that maximise the child's ability to reach his / her potential and to keep them safe' (Midland City Integrated Strategy for Improving the Lives of Disabled Children, 2006-08: 6).

A similar meaning was inferred by the aspiration to develop a comprehensive inter-agency database of disabled children (Midland City Integrated Strategy for Improving the Lives of Disabled Children, 2006-08: 22). In this context 'joint' was used to refer to processes such as joint commissioning, funding and strategy and this generally referred to resources. 'Partnership' typically referred to governance as in the structures of boards, as well as alluding to front line multi-agency collaboration for creating 'seamless' services.

The PSE was not specifically mentioned in the documents, with values associated with it rarely cited. When the word 'public' was used this referred to public health or information. Significantly no definition of the 'public' the board worked for was provided, although there were references to disabled children and their families.

Of the PSE values listed in Appendix 1, accountability was mentioned several times in documents as illustrated by the comment:

‘...we recognise that changes and improvements need to be made to ensure there is leadership, accountability, proper investment and effective management of services to disabled children and young people’ (Midland City Integrated Strategy for Improving the Lives of Disabled Children, 2006-08: 5).

Accountability to whom or what was clearly stated, typically represented by a diagram illustrating organisational governance and management structures (Midland City Children and Young People’s Plan, 2008-11: 21). However, there was a risk that such diagrams made accountability appear ‘linear’, not reflecting the messy complexity found in partnership working.

Accountability to the board was also demonstrated by the multi-agency working groups that reported to it. This was implied by the board’s terms of reference noting a function of the board was to:

‘Receive regular reports from chairs of task and finish groups and to ensure progress is being made on priority areas of the Integrated Strategy and any risks in the change process are appropriately addressed’ (Terms of Reference for Midland City Disabled Children’s Partnership Board, 2007: 3).

As well as accountability, further analysis of the document revealed other PSE values. However, these values were implied rather than made explicit. For example, documents described partners having ‘trust’ or ‘loyalty’ to each other to enable a shared prioritisation of resources, and ‘bureaucracy’ (and subsequently ‘accountability’) by ensuring board plans were monitored and reviewed. The public interest was identified in the terms of reference ‘To co-ordinate and combine their (board members) expertise, personnel and resources in order to deliver an integrated approach to services for children and young people...’ and improving services for users demonstrated by ECM outcomes (DfES, 2003). Furthermore, the public interest was seen in the desire to ‘foster the provision of quality outcomes for children and young people in Midland City’ (Terms of Reference for Midland City Disabled Children’s Partnership Board, 2007), as well as in statements such as services should enable disabled children to ‘develop life skills; be empowered to be independent; be

physically and emotionally healthy and able to cope with adolescence and becoming an adult; take part in activities that develop the social and emotional skills for life and enjoy leisure time; contribute to society, take up work and achieve economic wellbeing' (Midland City Short Breaks Strategy, 2009-11).

Lastly, the importance of professionals was interpreted in the phrase:

'The Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how local services and professionals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and for ensuring the effectiveness of these arrangements' (Midland City Children and Young People's Plan, 2008-11: 22).

Board observation

One board meeting was observed at a council office with 15 members from a total of 28 partners attending. Board members came from the local authority, health services, the Learning and Skills Council, as well as two parents. Of the attendees ten were female and five male. Three of the board members were from a black or Asian background.

The meeting was formal, task focused and with an agenda. Participants with planned items spoke the most and several attendees did not speak at all. Discussions relating to partnership working were observed, with one participant stating the board was not about one agency 'taking over' but agreeing how staff worked well together. Such a constructive approach was tempered by other, less positive, discussions of partnership working. For example, discussions on health care for disabled young people moving from children's to adult's services highlighted confusion about provision, as well as the slow transfer of files between agencies. Such examples were observed to challenge the positive rhetoric of partnership working.

Discussions were observed that could be interpreted as linking to the PSE, although the term itself was not cited. For instance, the public interest was implied by references to improving outcomes for young people or ensuring commissioning was 'child centred'. Bureaucracy was observed in the exacting processes and routines

reflected in extended discussions of board actions from previous meetings, some deferred to the future or even deleted as their meaning had been forgotten. Some actions focused on management accountability rather than user outcomes, although as an observer it was unclear whether outcomes included administrative issues. References to accountability were observed in discussions of the board links to the Children's Trust board. Other types of accountability observed included discussion of monitoring and evaluating service provision and performance data. In summary, the observation helped me to familiarise myself with the work of the board and the members themselves.

Participant's involvement with the board

20 board members were interviewed from the council, health services, schools, Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the voluntary sector as well as a parent. A table summarising the sample characteristics is attached in Appendix 6. The voluntary sector representative interviewed was jointly employed by Midland City Council and a local voluntary agency on a specific project. It was not possible to interview another voluntary sector representative, a senior manager who attended as a strategic representative from the voluntary sector. The findings here focus on board involvement with the interview findings on partnership working and the PSE reported in part two of this chapter. When undertaking my research I conducted the first part of the interviews without using the term the PSE at all, to see if the way people talked about their roles and career trajectories mentioned values and ethics.

A typical career path for a board member was described by a local authority participant specialising in strategic commissioning. After qualifying as a social worker in the 1970s, she noted that:

‘For the next 15 to 20 years I’ve worked in social work posts in and around the city in a number of different things, senior social work posts, and became a team manager in 1991 and in 1999 moved to what was then called strategic planning [...] and then the whole focus shifted to become more about commissioning [...]’. (06)

Originally initiated in a period of growth for children's services in the 1990s, her post was later integrated into the implementation of the New Labour Government's ECM strategy in Midland City and then into commissioning. This transition from professional practice to management was typical of the board members included in this study. She attended the board because of her expertise in strategic planning and commissioning.

Several participants had attended since the board was established, including health and local authority representatives. When developing the first integrated strategy for disabled children in Midland City:

'One of the key recommendations of the review (of disabled children's services in Midland City) and an objective in strategy was around establishing a disabled children's board because it was felt that within the city there wasn't that accountability in leadership for disabled children's services'. (01)

The commitment to strategically managing disabled children's services was identified in a core group providing leadership to ensure board momentum. For example, responsibility for strategy was articulated by a participant with a long history of attending the board. She remarked:

'I've always been on it (the board) since it's been there. I guess I was seen as the strategic person in what was inclusion services then around special needs and disabilities, and I was representing the services then...'. (11)

For some participants, board attendance was a requirement of job descriptions with one participant noting he had only started attending when he changed jobs, as his predecessor had attended. Another participant only attended when her manager was unable to, approximately five times over two years.

Several interviewees highlighted the responsibility of board involvement as a duty to plan services as partners. This was reinforced in the observation, with a council manager stating that the board's role was to develop and implement services,

reporting back on progress. However, as some participants attended irregularly, often prioritising other meetings, it was difficult to see how planning would occur in a consistent manner if not all partners were in attendance. For instance, one statutory board member only commented on business by email and usually chose not to attend. He remarked:

‘...I do still look at the agendas and I look at the notes, and then if I feel we should get involved then we do. The last sort of form of involvement that we did have, but that was again without me attending the board meetings, was getting involved in the short breaks programme’. (15)

A further rationale for attending the board was to report board business back to other meetings and networks. This was articulated by a school representative who said:

‘I’m there really to report back to head teachers in my own network and to a forum of city-wide head teachers if necessary.’ (17)

This comment showed the existence of wider professional and governance networks at a distance from both the board and the Children’s Trust board. These were interpreted as augmenting the formal processes for children and young people’s strategy in Midland City but were also separate from them.

A need to consult with disabled children and parents to integrate their views into board business was expressed by some participants. For a parent, attending the board provided the opportunity to offer a personal perspective in a professional setting. As she remarked:

‘My oldest daughter 16 years ago was diagnosed with cerebral palsy [...]. I got a position on the disabled children’s board as a parent rep about two years ago’. (18)

Lastly, a participant jointly employed by the council and voluntary sector to work with disabled children thought the board benefited from the skills he had gained from working in both sectors:

‘So, as well as reporting to the disabled and young people’s partnership board part of the deal was as well that I would take my skills and experience to (XXXX) (voluntary sector provider) and then bring stuff from (XXXX) back to Midland City, so there’d be a cross fertilisation’. (14)

However, although most participants met at the board to plan and implement services, this did not mean everyone understood the business in the same way. During my observation, confusion about partnership working arose in a discussion on the relationship between health services and the local authority. This discussion seemed uncomfortable, about jointly commissioning services for disabled young people moving into adult services, although the debate may have been part of the normal functioning of the board. It was clear from the observation that one participant thought a service still existed, while another said it had ended. Their lack of shared knowledge caused some confusion for the participants.

Key finding

Part one of the findings provides the context in which the research questions are explored, useful for introducing the overarching setting of the board and motivations for attending it. Issues that linked to the PSE, as well as partnership working, were identified in the documents. Furthermore, collaborative activity was overtly stated in them compared to PSE values which required additional interpretation. Discussions associated with the PSE were inferred from the observation.

It was found that board members had significant experience of working in public professions and were experienced in collaborative working. This was understandable given the nature of the policy context in which they worked, their training, and the networks they were involved with. For example, several of the local authority participants had 20 years or more experience, with one manager having 35 years of experience. However, it was not possible to identify a comprehensive set of shared PSE values by observing how the board interacted or by reviewing their documents.

Part two: interview findings on partnership working and the public service ethos

Part Two is divided into three sections: (1) board members' understanding of the PSE; (2) public service values and the board; (3) the PSE and the board - other values.

Board members' understanding of the PSE

Meaning of the PSE

The majority of participants had heard of the PSE, but reflecting its fragmented meaning several said they would have difficulty defining it. One way of describing it was as a personal ethos or calling for public sector workers. It was asserted:

'I think for the most part people want to make a difference and people do want to go home at the end of the day feeling they've done something worthwhile'. (06)

This comment indicated that some sense of personal ethos potentially contributed to why people chose to work in public services. This was contrasted with a comment about the private sector by another contributor who said:

'I do think there is an ethos within public service about working to improve the lot of the community. I must say I think it is different from private industry'. (12)

As well as illustrating personal beliefs, this quote articulated the possibility of a shared understanding of the PSE in public services. One participant believed such a 'global' PSE existed, pointing out:

'I'm not sure that necessarily there are differences between different areas of public services or between different levels within the public sector. I think if you go and talk to operational people, once you get past all the baggage about pay and grading and all of the policies and all of that lot, once you get past that I think there is a common view of the public sector...'. (03)

In contrast to this view, another participant thought the PSE varied in different parts of the public sector with no overarching ethos. These variations were shaped by the diversity of policy and performance arising from central and local government requirements for health, education or social services.

It was stated the PSE may be stronger or weaker in different parts of the same organisation. It was suggested employees from children and young people's services in the council were more committed to the PSE because of their professional background. However, it was noted:

‘...when I talk to other people who work for the city council in other directorates, then I get the feeling from them as well that they're actually working for the public good. [...] So I think it is fairly common, but then perhaps I just happen to know people who share the same values so it's difficult to say really.’ (20)

Differences in professional backgrounds were thought to influence how the PSE was understood. For example, an educational participant believed there were differences in how social services and schools worked with children and young people:

‘...I look at the way social services have to work with kids and it's the nature of their job, I think, that they have to work in different ways to the way we work with kids. And that's often to do with the lack of continuity I think’.
(17)

This suggested the PSE is shaped by how need is defined and services delivered by different professions. Social workers worked to a high threshold of need, often in situations of family crisis, but it was thought teachers provided services in a more predictable or consistent way. Both professions were committed to children and young people, but their perceptions of the public interest differed.

One participant wondered if, when senior managers referred to values, the PSE would continue to have an influence on their role as a senior manager. However, it was stated that the PSE was probably stronger for front line staff and lower

management. Nevertheless, it seemed the PSE could have a strategic function for senior management, as articulated by a participant who wanted to have a:

‘...strategic impact on the way residential or community services were going. [...] I always feel that local authorities pay a lot of money for the services they’re getting and I want to see that the money’s being paid [spent] well, not only internally but also externally’ (14)

Another definition of the PSE offered by a participant focussed on the need for honesty with service users about the limitations of what resources were available. This meant a social worker telling a service user about financial support:

‘I’m a public servant so I have to account for how I spend it (money) and at the moment with the current financial situation [...] I’m actually saying well I’m sorry, you’d want me to do all this but unfortunately I have to meet the needs of your circumstances and it’s those gaps that I have to support you with, the others I can’t and that’s very hard’. (5)

Using resources effectively was implied by a board member who thought the PSE was changing as public services became increasingly business-like. Moreover, there were private sector practices which could be applied in the public sector, including project management principles and attention to value for money. Furthermore, this participant believed the private sector had also learned lessons from public services particularly the need for developing a clearer focus on client need.

The PSE was additionally thought to link with democratic processes. When asked about the PSE one board member said he:

‘...immediately thought of local authorities and things delivered through a locally, a democratically elected body.’ (09)

His perception was that the PSE had always been related to the role of elected politicians, because of a local electoral ‘feedback loop’ between service providers and elected members. He wondered whether providing health services was part of the

local democratic framework and, if so, he questioned how the PCT would perceive the council being the foremost exponent of the PSE.

Motivation for working in public services

As well as describing the PSE participants remarked on their motivation to work in public services. Personal, professional and political influences were identified.

Background was influential for many participants. For example, one participant emphasised coming from a family committed to championing equality and trade union involvement. Another interviewee felt his own values linked to an upbringing of serving the community, which he saw as a formative influence. As a young person he had joined the Scouts, an organisation he described as having a public service element. The use of the term community was also used by a local authority participant who stated her commitment to improving the wellbeing health and quality of life of the local population.

For a health participant, family background influenced an interest in social issues with attendance at medical school being the manifestation of her caring perspective and political outlook. This led to her working in:

‘...community paediatrics which is different from being a hospital doctor dealing with ill children, which is perhaps where the public bit comes in, and children’s public health, and wanting to act for children as a group rather than just as individuals’. (10)

One interviewee stated his own problems with dyslexia at school was influential in choosing to work with disabled children. He noted:

‘...that if you get the right support at the right time and you are encouraged to take the opportunities then you can actually exceed what other people think you can do. You can achieve your potential. And that is really why I do the job that I do’. (03)

A council manager said contributing to society was central to his beliefs:

‘I do remember when I was at university [...] I could go down that (business) route and make loads of money or I could go into public service and I know I won’t make loads of money in public service. So why did I do that? I think probably it was about personal values really, about equity and responsibility of the more vulnerable people in society and all that kind of thing really. And also some negativity about, you know, this was in the eighties when all the money-making stuff was everything, and I was a bit anti all of that kind of thing, and not wanting to be hugely materialistic about things or needing loads of money’. (11)

In addition, subtle differences were identified between the wish to work in public services and their choice of profession. When asked why she preferred to work in the public sector, a health representative asked if I meant ‘Why did I choose to be a doctor?’ This calling to profession was identified by a participant from a teaching background who remarked:

‘I chose to teach [...] I don’t think I ever saw myself as coming into public service, I saw myself as a teacher.’ (07)

Profession and training was thought a ‘springboard’ for moving into senior management within public services. An early interest in strategy for one participant originated from membership of a multi-disciplinary social work team. This established a commitment to integrated working which she continued to apply:

‘I could see quite quickly that working with individual clients is okay and it gives you a certain level of satisfaction, but actually if you want to make a big difference then you have to be at a senior management level.’ (19)

Not surprisingly, some participants started their careers in other sectors, such as the private sector, before moving to public services. Commenting on a move from retail work to working in a library, one participant argued this was not a calling but an opportunity:

‘No, it wasn’t a calling. And I didn’t quite stumble, because I made an active approach, I actually saw the job advertised – the first job advertised – in the newspaper [...] I thought, you know, ‘I could do that job; I’ve got the basic skills, I’ve got the knowledge, I read, I know a book from a CD’. (02)

Lastly, one participant said his faith had informed his choice to train as a social worker, and:

‘I then had that (faith) overlaid with what I think we would all call academically Christian Socialist and the RM Titmuss work and Ann Oakley and various other work like that so I had that’. (13)

The connection between religion and a ‘calling’ to work in public services was related to attending church and a moral upbringing. Although no longer religious this participant remained committed to social work and social justice.

Key finding

Different ways to describe the PSE were advanced. These included: PSE as meaningful for public staff individually, a shared definition across public services, and a view that it varies in different settings.

Personal definitions related to what the PSE meant for individuals, such as a desire to help society informed by background and biography. Examples include political belief, faith or the wish to improve an issue they felt had marred their personal development. It was typical for participants to have some sort of public service motivation related to these themes. However, a difference in motivation was identified with regard to choosing to work in the public service, compared with choosing a profession that might be located in the public sector.

It was suggested the PSE is shaped by how need is defined and services delivered by the diversity of agencies involved in partnership working. Social workers were thought to work to a high threshold of need compared with other professionals, such as teachers. Both professions were committed to children and young people, but their perceptions of the public interest differed.

The PSE was thought to be stronger for front line practitioners, lower management and early career staff, when compared with senior managers. Explanations for this were thought to lie in senior staff experiencing different pressures such as extra management responsibility, including a focus on value for money and service redesign.

However while several participants remarked that one's individual's PSE could diminish when moving into management, the influence of PSE on strategic managers was still recognised. Strategic readings of the PSE, when defining local priorities for public services, differed to front line applications, such as in relationships between professionals and service users. It was asserted that the individual's underlying ethos would be different, but not lessened, when the PSE was applied strategically rather than on the front line.

In sum, the findings suggested that board members' understanding of the PSE was informed by a variety of experiences, values and motivations. These were manifested in organisational and professional settings, as well as the formal space of the board.

Public service values and the board

This section addresses the research question, what is the understanding of the PSE in a partnership board? This section is informed by values identified in the work of Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) and Plant (2003). Firstly, participants were asked to describe what they thought public service values were. They were then shown a list of selected 'traditional' public values (Appendix 1) and asked what these meant for the board. Lastly, they were invited to suggest additional values for the board in addition to those in Appendix 1.

Board members' views on 'traditional' public service values

Values that appeared to resonate easily with participants included accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, public interest and motivation. Loyalty, professionalism, trust, impartiality and judgment generated less discussion. This is noteworthy given the emphasis on key values such as trust in the wider literature (Plant, 2003; Lawton,

2005: 238; Rhodes 2007: 1246; Davies, 2011: 6). However, this does not mean that these values were any less significant, instead it might indicate that they are taken for granted as the basis of public sector employment.

Accountability

As a PSE value, the standard description of accountability might be thought of as being accountable to one's employing agency or profession. Furthermore, as suggested by Pratchett and Wingfield, local authority employees are accountable to the political structures within which they work (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641-2). However, in the context of partnership working, accountability in practice suggests that public officers, including board members, are accountable for a range of issues and to different people. A multi-agency partnership board adds to this complexity with different accountabilities existing, for example to the board, the Children's Trust board, employer, profession, government department and disabled children.

To obtain authority it regularly deferred to its own chair, who was a senior manager, or the Children's Trust board. As a participant said:

'On a day to day basis it makes decisions but it has always deferred its actual account... it hasn't perceived itself to be accountable in its own right, and I think that's quite interesting'. (013)

It was thought the board had a strong link to the Children's Trust board. It was remarked:

'Yeah, I mean I think accountability is one of the key ones (values) because that's what we've kind of been working towards, about having somebody with responsibility in the city for disability and reporting upwards within the structure, as well as downwards towards practitioners as well'. (01)

However, it was unclear whether board members had a shared understanding of accountability. This was understandable in terms of the confusion about local governance reflected in participants' comments. One local authority member thought

that she was firstly accountable to her employer, rather than the board, but went on to question how non-council agencies could be accountable to a council led board. However, her allegiance to the board was by inference rather than through line management accountability, and as a council employee she was ultimately answerable to the local authority. This was corroborated in the observation where confusion was voiced about relationships with other management boards. An example was given of a board linked to services for special educational needs children, with board members in my study unsure if that board took precedence over their own board or whether it had a 'political' function, being chaired by a councillor.

A school participant also questioned who the board was accountable to:

'Whether it is the city council, whether it would be the cabinet part of the council. I'm not aware if there's a scrutiny committee who oversees the board'. (7)

Furthermore, confusion about accountability was articulated by a health representative who thought the board was answerable to the Children's Trust board, but additionally to an unspecified 'innovations group' that other participants did not refer to.

During the observation, it became clear from a discussion about who should chair the meeting that this required further clarification with the lead councillor. Although it was a multi-agency board, no one questioned the statement that the council political lead would have to be consulted. Although the board was led by the council, it nonetheless raised issues about accountability in a multi-agency setting.

Each member had their own lines of accountability but it was unclear how they were accountable to the board. In theory, this was set out in Midland City's Children's Plan, stating the council's strategic director and lead councillor for children and young people were accountable for partnership arrangements. However, it was additionally stated that although members of the Children's Trust board cooperated to develop policy and services strategically, they were each accountable to their own

governance bodies. An example of this was when grants were allocated to Midland City by central government, such as *Aiming High*, with responsibility handed to the local authority and not the partnership. These differences of opinion inevitably impacted how resources could be used:

‘I think one of the things that’s clear is that, when you talk about having a strategic partnership group, and then you say, ‘Right, we will share our money,’ or ‘We will align budgets,’ you actually get a considerable degree of reluctance.’ (13)

Regarding political accountability, although the lead councillor for children and young people did not attend the board he requested regular updates. Additionally, strategic management was interested in the work of the board and a school participant thought this helped to focus the board on how it evidenced accountability.

Below the board various sub-groups worked on different aspects of policy and strategy. Because of differences in specialist knowledge between the board and its sub-groups it was suggested that they could not be totally accountable to a board that did not understand the subtleties involved. It was remarked:

‘...I haven’t got a sense that the board has got a significant enough concern about disability to be asking a lot of detailed questions about it, although it is a fairly high profile issue. We’ve got a strategy which is we don’t have a strategy for everything, so there’s some accountability...but I don’t think it’s very clear at the moment...’. (11)

One agenda item in the meeting I observed was to review the board’s action plan, assess what had been implemented and monitor outstanding tasks. An interviewee stated that when board members did not carry out an agreed action they were rarely challenged at board meetings, and as a result it was questionable how accountable they were there. For example, the board was unable to direct an agency represented at the board to undertake an assessment for a disabled child. When members were unsure what to do some issues were deferred rather than resolved. However, having

parents at meetings was thought by one board member to improve accountability with professional promises open to public scrutiny:

‘...there was a discussion about a document and one of the parents said it was much better than it had been before, and I saw the officer who presented that visibly wipe his brow. [...]. And it’s that sort of accountability, it’s the pragmatics of it’. (09)

One health participant commented that she was ultimately accountable to the General Medical Council. However, a different health member saw accountability as not only to her profession but to patients too. Illustrating multiple accountabilities, she added that as a manager and board member she also represented her organisation. Lastly, a parent representative considered she was accountable for taking information back to other parents.

Analysis suggested that a hierarchy of accountability existed. This set the context within which services were commissioned, information managed and performance measured, by reporting to the board and the board in turn reporting to the Children’s Trust Board.

Participants gave examples of other sites of governance the board linked with, such as the PCT and central government. However, the interpretation of accountability could differ. For example, one participant did not think there was a hierarchy of accountability between his joint employers, the voluntary sector and the council. He saw authority as horizontal, implying that he was equally critical or loyal to both agencies. Offering an example of multiple accountabilities he added:

‘Through the (voluntary body) as champion I’m accountable to the (voluntary body), but obviously then as a joint partner I’m accountable to the board and Midland City for making the post work’. (14)

While considering the lines of accountability for NHS participants, a council employee thought they were accountable to the PCT and even the Department of Health. Therefore, different lines of accountability were thought to exist compared to

one single line of accountability to the Children's Trust. For another participant, multi-agency board members were accountable to the Department of Children Families and Schools (now Department for Education).

Furthermore, accountability raised issues about organisational governance, specifically the process for 'signing off' documents. One board member recalled a document which was:

'...agreed at the disabled children's board without very much difficulty [...]. I then had to take it to the Children's Trust board, but interestingly I had to take it to the Children's Trust board after I'd taken it to both the adult social care senior management team and the children's social care senior management team, so they were the people who actually signed it off'. (013)

After agreeing it, the Children's Trust board said it still had to be sent to agencies for ratification. This process suggests a relationship between 'bureaucratic' accountability and the public interest.

Lastly, with a focus on service users and citizens, some interviewees thought the board was primarily accountable to disabled children and parents. The children's champion said he was ultimately accountable to children and young people commenting:

'It's the role that I have been asked to do, I've been paid to champion the inclusion engagement participation for disabled children and young people, to be part of it, tell us what we think'. (014)

This reflects a wider view of accountability expressed by another participant:

'...we're spending public money and we're acting for the public in that way, so I think that that is important'. (010)

This suggested two sorts of accountability to the public - one to local disabled children and a wider accountability to taxpayers. Therefore, accountability was

described as being answerable to both individuals and groups but as with other public values, such as the public interest, defining accountability was challenging.

In sum, analysis suggested a more complex picture of accountability and governance than just one of hierarchy, with participants being accountable for a range of issues and to different groups.

Bureaucratic behaviour

Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) defined bureaucratic behaviour as public servants demonstrating honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. All of these characteristics are thought key for working in public services. However, as a study of local government officers, their work does not consider the different perspectives on bureaucratic behaviour as a PSE value that may be identified in a partnership board.

A complex picture arose when attempting to describe bureaucratic behaviour and partnership working. Some participants thought that bureaucratic behaviour could hinder the work of the board but that this could be mitigated by professional administration and chairing.

Some interviewees thought that the bureaucratic processes linked to the board from the participating agencies were positive. For example, agreeing a policy on disabled children had been straightforward, and remarking on this process it was stated:

‘We represent various bureaucracies, I think where we can try and get things done as quickly as possible in as responsive a way as possible then I think we try and do that...’. (04)

This view was echoed by a comment from a female interviewee who did not think bureaucratic processes slowed down business:

‘That culture, the bureaucratic behaviour as a negative I don’t think is necessarily there. Because people are working to a more integrated approach to the service, not just multi-agency work ‘. (02)

However, a school representative said the amount of paperwork required for board meetings undermined core business. Reflecting on his own attendance, a different participant thought he was:

‘...probably not the only person around the table not to understand it all (board papers). Because [...] it [paperwork] comes from different groups’.
(17)

He suggested that reports could use different terminology and jargon with meanings not always understood by board members. Another interviewee noted that organisations wanted papers to be presented in specific ways, with one participant recalling a PCT meeting which:

‘... didn’t seem to recognise the value of any papers that didn’t have a finance or a budget plan attached to them. So strategies that didn’t have a financial implication for the PCT weren’t seen as being important even though the government were saying it had to be’ (09)

Another example of such bureaucratic processes was a joint PCT and council job for which staff from either organisation could apply. The council managed the recruitment process but the post was not advertised on the NHS website as it was incompatible with their processes. Consequently, no health staff applied for the post.

In addition, it was thought other bureaucratic processes outside of, but linked to the board, had the potential to slow down recommendations made there. It was stated:

‘...if you take something to the Children’s Trust board or to the disabled children’s board what tends to happen is that all of those organisations have to take the decision back to their own executive boards to sign up’. (01)

Being part of the Children’s Trust meant it was inevitable the board would be woven into a wider bureaucratic processes. For example, during the meeting I observed, an

officer mention a paper he had written had been discussed at a joint commissioning group and was now 'doing the rounds' of other boards.

Documents moving through one agency's processes could be held up by another's and understanding the bureaucratic etiquette of the organisations involved influenced whether reports moved easily through them. This process was thought to be linked to accountability:

'It doesn't stand alone with representatives on it; the representatives on it then are answerable to the Children and Young People's Trust [...]. I'm on a number of boards related to regeneration projects, of which the local authority is the accountable body, and that can be frustrating and very bureaucratic because before you can make decisions, even though you're a board, you're a board that's still answerable to the local authority.' (04)

However, bureaucratic behaviours could improve accountability. Bureaucracy provided:

'...an audit trail because quite often, particularly where we're dealing with grants, central government wants to see an audit trail [...]. ...it is necessary to make sure that people who've been elected as representatives by the population are actually consulted before decisions are made and money is spent'. (09)

However, these processes seemed paradoxical, as senior managers attended meetings to hasten board decision making, but even they could not confirm agreement without co-operation from their own organisations. Agreements in principle frequently had to be consulted upon in their own agencies, and:

'...that kind of delays things because each of those organisations then has their own timescales and reporting mechanisms. PCT trust boards meet, I think, once every two or three months so you'd have to wait to get on an agenda... And so before you know it six months could have gone by'. (01)

It was suggested that these processes existed to provide a degree of self-protection with bureaucracy used as a shield. It was stated:

‘I think there are some people who may be hiding behind what they think their organisation expects of them, which can then become... which can seem like bureaucratic behaviour’. (20)

In sum, it seemed inevitable that bureaucratic behaviour impacted on the work of the board. Although the board was committed to improving services, the number of bureaucratic processes partners brought there had the potential to undermine business, or at least slow it down. However, this was linked to accountability, ensuring different partners were answerable to their own organisations.

Public interest

Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) defined the public interest as public servants extending an interest beyond their organisations or professions to serve the ‘public good’.

Interview data revealed different views on what the public interest means and how it applies in practice. For example, in chapter 2 a number of ways of describing the public interest were detailed, including well-being for the public, as well its relationship to politics and policy. The relationship between the public interest, service users and wider needs groups, such as disabled children, were noted. An example of this was ensuring ECM outcomes featured in service level agreements with voluntary agencies commissioned to provide services for disabled children. Furthermore, during the observation a board member argued that the commissioning of services by officers needed to be ‘flipped’ to make the process ‘child centred’. It was not clear what ‘flipped’ meant, but this could be interpreted as meaning commissioning services from the child’s perspective, rather than to meet the needs of organisations.

Several perspectives on the relationship between the public interest and the board were identified. These included improving public services, local councillors representing citizens, involving service users in planning, and providing value for

money for taxpayers. Several participants emphasised that in this context the public interest related to disabled children. For example, at its inception it had endeavoured to ensure the needs of disabled children in Midland City were reflected in how it planned ECM outcomes and the policy context underpinning it. A public interest focus on disabled children at the board was described as:

‘...for disabled children to have the same opportunities that non-disabled children have, and for us to ensure that they have the access and entitlement to services. What we want to try and do is eradicate some of the barriers that they face to accessing those entitlements, and that any resources that we have are directed to enable disabled children to achieve their outcomes.’ (01)

In addition, it was noted:

‘...in this case we’re saying the bit of the public that we’re acting in the interest of is disabled children, so that focus must be the top’. (10)

The PSE value of motivation was thought to be closely linked with the public interest:

‘I think you’ve also got professionals around the table who work primarily in disabled children’s services, either on the education front or the social-care front, who face those constant barriers as part and parcel of the day-to-day work, so their motivation will be about how they can sort out some of those issues...’ (01)

Motivation was identified here as the desire to improve services through providing specialist disabled children’s toilets in Midland City - suggested as the public interest manifested in practice to enable:

‘...people with complex needs to be able to go into the city centre and access things within the city centre without having to be worrying about if my son or daughter needs to be changed’ (03)

The observation data contributed to explicating how the public interest might be manifested in practice. Discussions about commissioning short breaks to improve inclusion for disabled children in youth clubs, 'Saturday' clubs and summer play schemes suggested that the PSE was not just a theoretical notion, but could manifest in more appropriate service delivery.

However, once again it appeared the concept of public interest might have different meanings for the various organisations taking part in the board. The local authority was described as the 'democratic arm', with councillors' interested in representing their constituencies, leading one participant to question how local politics informed health. A school representative questioned whether the 'interest' of the board was well defined:

'The board acts within [...] the way it acts. I think it would act better if it had an ethos mission statement, or whatever you wanted to call it, that it reviewed, because then you would know your criteria, you would know your base line'. (07)

This view was supported by another interviewee who considered that a strategic approach to the public interest was lacking. It was remarked:

'In terms of public interest in a more global sense, I don't think it's (the board) spent enough time thinking about the wider agenda, the wider public strategic influencing that, and I think that's part of this particular authority's problem: it's to do with its performance, it's to do with it not valuing some of the things that it does actually'. (13)

In addition to board strategy it was suggested that the public interest should include value for tax payers, with one participant providing a financial reading of the relationship between the public interest and the PSE:

'The public interest is always involved as well when it comes down to how you best use public money.' (04)

Another manifestation of the public interest and the PSE was articulated in relation to how services consulted children, young people and parents. One interviewee was confident the main focus should be disabled children, although the public interest could be associated with parents at the board. Parent representatives attending the board regularly met with a wider group of parents who, as a focus of the public interest, were able to discuss plans and bring views back to the board to inform policy making.

Concern was raised that the public interest was weakened when agencies made deals among themselves, as they might potentially agree an action to get something they wanted rather than meeting the needs of users. This provided a rare criticism of public interest at the board, as did the comment of another interviewee who, in jest, wondered whether there was greater interest in career aspirations than the public.

It was apparent that there were a number of different perceptions of what the public interest meant. Reflecting on the different perspectives one participant suggested two examples that act as a conclusion to this section:

‘...it’s looking at the public interest at a strategic level, the local politics, the local community in general terms, community cohesion, equal opportunities, facilitating that, of which all of course is all perfectly appropriate and laudable. And there is an agenda which is about delivering the public ethos, the public interest of the consumer and delivering an improved service. So I think it’s attempting to do both things and I don’t think that is, you know, a problem’. (13)

In summary, the interviewees suggested that the main focus of the public interest for board members was disabled children. However, it was also thought a focus on budgets could undermine this

With their commitment to the PSE public servants extended their gaze beyond the boundaries of their organisations and professions to address a wider public good. Considering these wider issues was deemed to be a necessary part of working in the public interest.

Motivation

As a PSE value, motivation is defined as how public servants undertake rewarding work for society above self-interest or the pursuit of profit (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996). Motivations for attending a public partnership board could include improving services, obtaining information and resources, developing networks, being directed to go there, as well as to develop ones' career.

Similar motivations were advanced by participants. A motivation to improve public services by working collaboratively was thought crucial. Board members were keen to tackle problems through multi-agency working which maintained and even revitalised interest in their jobs. Both altruistic and self-interested motivations linked to the PSE were articulated. For example, a voluntary sector member attended the board to improve services, as well as obtaining information on resources to sustain their own organisation.

Professionals and a parent representative expressed the view that attending the board improved services for disabled children, a key motivation for attending described as:

‘...working on behalf of communities and being motivated by that as a cause; the interest in the job and the motivation that you actually get, you know, you want to get out of bed in the morning, so a sense of purpose I suppose is how I’d see that’. (04)

Strategic motivations for attending were advanced as crucial to developing integrated disabled children’s services. For example the complexity of their work meant that:

‘So the motivation is about...we can’t do this on our own. Health needs social care, social care needs health, education needs the others...and I think that’s the key thing.’ (013)

One participant’s motivation to attend was to improve her own agency’s service for the benefit of disabled children. However she recognised that there was an organisational motivation for attending meetings, commenting:

‘You’re not going to go into something strategic unless there’s a benefit in it for you. Not just to sit there talking once every three months about equipment for disabled children. (02)

One participant questioned whether every board member shared the same level of motivation. She had occasionally been frustrated when participants expressed an interest in working on board projects, but their motivation was undermined by other priorities. Nevertheless, she sometimes felt the same way herself and remarked:

‘...sometimes I feel that as well because I’ve got so many emergencies and urgencies that I’ve got back at the office, I’m thinking ‘have I been sitting here two hours, I’ve got all those to pick up’...’ (05)

This reflected a tension between the board as a useful meeting place, but one which used valuable time that could be prioritised for front line operational matters.

A minority of participants thought that some members might attend to obtain ‘a feather in their cap’, one comment suggesting that participants went to meetings to enhance their careers or increase their status. However, the interviewee who articulated this did not think this had been a problem. Another board member suggested that motivation could be affected by strategic reviews in participants’ agencies and this could have a negative effect on attendance.

As a PSE value the interviews suggested motivation had personal, operational and strategic meanings. The motivation to work collaboratively to improve public services was articulated as foremost.

Loyalty

As a PSE value, a number of loyalties are identified for public servants, including to department, organisation, profession, government institutions and community (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996). The fieldwork identified different loyalties including to partnership working and the board, and to children and families.

Several board members said that in the first instance their loyalty was to their employing organisation or service, articulated by the comment:

‘ I think their loyalty lies with the people that pays the mortgage when the month comes...[...] whoever’s employing... you know, there’s that element of loyalty. But there’s also the loyalty to your service. And perhaps people will put their loyalty to their service before they do to the executive board’.
(02)

Such loyalty to employer was reinforced by a remark on partner bureaucracies linked to the board, with the expectation the agencies would:

‘...have to go back to their own organisation, so I don’t think there’s anybody there who would forsake and say, well, because the board’s asking me to do this I’m going to do this and I’ll deal with my organisation afterwards’. (01)

This comment implied an association between loyalty and accountability, but it was unclear from the comments whether one value had more importance than the other. Loyalty to organisation, as well as profession, was weakened at the board where members did not have overall responsibility to make decisions:

‘...I don’t think any of the people there have got dedicated authority to take a decision without recourse back to whatever their line manager structures are’.
(01)

This linked to the degree of independent decision making individuals had. If members were unable to agree an action this was because accountability was ultimately to their employing organisation that they needed to consult. Although board members attended with good intentions and a willingness to contribute, this did not mean they had the power to implement every decision. An example was the desire to finance plans jointly at the board, prevented by budgetary constraints in their own organisations.

Reflecting previous discussions, one participant saw loyalty being to those who 'paid her wages'. She questioned how one could be loyal to the board as it met infrequently and felt like a place where you 'brought stuff' and just talked about it. She thought this could change if an outcome benefitting all of the agencies was discussed and they would then be:

'...totally loyal, because everybody's getting what they want. That's just strategic play, isn't it?' (02)

In addition, on occasion a stronger loyalty was needed to maintain the board's effectiveness. It was noted:

'...there are times when there are things that have to be said behind closed doors [...] so you're loyal to the group in order to actually make sure that happens effectively'. (04)

It was thought that if one chose loyalty to the board over employer, one's agency might accept this decision if a positive outcome then followed. This suggested a degree of flexibility between loyalty to the board and employer. A representative of a learning and skills agency said he was paid to make sure he got things right and although his own agency paid his salary he would not be afraid to speak out if he felt something wasn't right. He noted:

'I think it's actually disloyal to actually not be frank with your own organisation when it's quite clear that there are things that we're doing that's not done properly or there are better ways of doing things than we probably thought'. (04)

Asked if there was a hierarchy of loyalty, one interviewee remarked that ideally board members all attended for the same purpose with loyalties not significantly strained. This suggested a link between professional loyalty and morality:

‘...I think morally we’re all signed up to the same kind of agenda and we want the best, and they would argue that they are all loyal in terms of partnership working’. (01)

An attempt to implement a multi-agency assessment process was advanced as an example of the relationship between loyalty and partnership working. The board had recommended an assessment process should be extended to disabled children, but a decision on this was needed from a different board. Ultimately this had not been agreed by the other board and one interviewee questioned if this board had been entirely loyal to disabled children’s needs.

Lastly, it was thought that the board was loyal to children and families, as it aspired to deliver better services for them. For the parents attending their loyalty would be to their own child or other parents they represented.

Professionalism

As a PSE value, professionalism is stated as linking to motivation, with public servants choosing a vocation to serve the public. Furthermore, professional values act as a guide to emphasise that service and professional knowledge ought to be used for public good rather than private benefit (Plant, 2003:562). However, in their work on the professions of teaching, medicine and law, Cooke et al. (2013) note that professionalism and professional values, for example accountability, have different meanings.

For the board, professionalism was described in two ways, firstly, acting professionally and, secondly, in the relationships between the different professions who met there.

Firstly, acting professionally was described as one’s conduct in the board. It was stated:

‘...professionalism strikes me about having knowledge, having a sense of purpose and wanting to do the best that you can and operating in a

professional way. And I think that that has been demonstrated in the board in the time that I've been involved'. (04)

Acting professionally was thought to be associated with having a good understanding what was required at the board, reading board papers before meetings, being willing to engage in meetings and ensuring one's contributions were useful. To work in a multi-agency board required honesty, integrity and transparency, although it was acknowledged that there were times when such behaviours would fall short.

Secondly, on the relationships between different professionals at the board, it is inevitable that as public officials engage with partner organisations, this will expose them to different practices (Lawton, 1998). As well as acting in a professional manner, professionalism was stated as sharing information about one's own professional background at the board. Such discussions between partners were thought to improve awareness of different professional values, as well as improving understanding of how practitioners implemented board strategies. Learning and changing one's views in light of board discussions was considered crucial.

In contrast to this positive view of professional relationships some concerns were identified. A health participant recalled a discussion by professionals at the board on the merits of the medical and social models of disability. She suggested this was indicative of unhelpful boundaries between social care and medical staff:

'...there's been a lot of discussion around the medical model versus the social model. And that has really irritated me sometimes because I think the people who put forward the social model as the sort of zealots for the social model actually don't understand medics and don't understand the way that medics working with disabled children work. So that I've found sometimes quite difficult, and I think actually you need both models...' (10)

Such a disparity in views between health and the council children's services was recalled by another participant. Before the board started there was a planning group on services for disabled children and although this group had been user, rather than

strategically focused, there were differences in opinion about how to define need. It was reported:

‘...they (health) wanted a register that would give them epidemiological data and we (council children’s services) were saying that’s not what we need, we want a register so the parents have information about services and that was the medical versus the social model very much’. (6)

This suggested that the different agencies within which the board participants worked might define need differently. Although this specific example was a point of contention, the different understandings of need held by professionals was considered to be positive, enabling an holistic view of a child’s needs.

Another element of professionalism and partnership working was agreeing definitions. As seen in the previous discussion of bureaucratic behaviour, different terminology and jargon had a potential to impede how participants carried out a worthwhile activity to promote the PSE. For example, one participant said:

‘...when I hear the word transition I think about children moving from children’s services to adult social care services. The people with an education background round the table are thinking about children starting school [...]. The health people are thinking something else again, about transitions from the pre-school type things to school nurse-type things [...]. It is very important to define what you mean and what you’re talking about...’. (6)

Lastly, it was questioned whether adherence to one’s profession was stronger than to one’s employer. One participant’s view had changed since becoming a manager. She previously put children’s or a parent’s needs first but organisational and management issues now took precedence. Therefore, as with other PSE values, for example motivation, professionalism linked to operational issues in terms of being a professional working directly with the public.

Trust

Plant states that the relationship between trust and public services is complex. He suggests that this includes trust between citizens and the public sector; trust between government and citizens; trust between government and the public sector; trust between people who work in the public sector; trust between the public sector and other partners delivering public services, and; trust in relation to the asymmetry of information and expertise between professionals and the public (Plant, 2003: 562-4).

Although board participants thought trust was crucial for partnership working, discussion of it was less explicit than other values. However, this did not mean that board members did not trust each other. Rather, it might indicate that trust was embedded in partnership working.

As with other PSE values, trust related to how the board managed itself, facing *inwards* to how the board managed its business. This was seen by attendees trusting each other, as well as trust existing between organisations. An *outward* looking trust to wider society was identified, described as the public placing trust in public servants to do their jobs effectively.

It was believed that trust existed between members on the board with one participant noting:

‘...the trust in individuals to actually get the job done, the trust in individuals who represent the organisation to actually pass on that information and, you know, I think that all is evident in what we do’. (04)

This was supported by another participant who felt it was a board where:

‘...you don’t kind of feel you’re going to go along and get shafted or anything’. (08)

A school representative said she had no reason to mistrust anyone. However, this did not mean members had earned her trust but rather, it depended on how they acted:

‘I trust that people will behave professionally at the board. I trust that there will be professional responses. But to take trust to that level of confidence, there’s not enough experience, my own experience isn’t strong enough for me to say that. I trust (xxxx) because she shows, if she’s going to do something it happens’. (07)

This comment suggests that although trust was required to plan services, different levels of trust existed in partnership working. However, opportunities to develop trust had not been available, and:

‘...if we’re going to develop true partnership working then that trust has to be there, the relationships have to be there, and people have to be up front about what they can and can’t do and what they’re bringing to the table. And actually in some of the discussions that we have we don’t have a kind of an honest discussion really’. (01)

It was apparent there was little opportunity for participants to meet informally outside of the board, but it was thought by having the opportunity to do so this could help to develop trust between members and strengthen shared values as public staff. Such opportunities could help nurture understanding of each agency’s cultures and challenge any misunderstandings.

Another theme linked to trust was the differing governance arrangements of the local authority and the PCT. The local authority was politically accountable to its elected members, whereas the PCT’s governance was not based on elected representatives. Plans to integrate council and PCT disability services would therefore introduce additional political accountabilities into the PCT, and this might change how they understood trust.

Impartiality

For Plant, rules that are impartial and applied in a disinterested way are central to the administration and delivery of public services (Plant, 2003: 564).

It was thought impartiality might impact on decisions and recommendations made at the board, apart from any personal benefits for attendees. The organisations which attended brought different approaches to decision making. Challenging oneself as a representative of your agency to ensure impartiality was required. It was noted:

‘...taking an impartial role and looking at things in a more dispassionate way, you know; we don’t all have the answers’. (04)

Impartiality as a value was suggested by a participant’s comments about planning services. Strategic commissioning was seen as making sure money was used effectively, for example by the voluntary sector, but internally for services provided by publically employed staff. A participant remarked:

‘...I’ve always had this thing about to me it doesn’t matter who you’re commissioning from, to do it you should expect the same high quality standard regardless and if it’s an internal service that is failing to do it that should be challenged just as much as commissioned services externally should be challenged’. (14)

A health participant thought that board members might find it difficult to be impartial:

‘I don’t think that people are particularly partial, as it were, you know, they’re not like really banging on about... Well, there is a bit of banging on about their bit of the world, so I guess in that sense people aren’t necessarily particularly impartial’. (08)

Power relations were thought to affect decision making processes. It was articulated:

‘I think there are some strong members of the board and I think if they think something’s important and they push it forward they probably are quite powerful so, no in general the board is impartial but it’s also influenced by its membership’. (06)

A manifestation of these dynamics was identified in the way budgets were managed at the board. One participant asserted that recommendations to spend a grant were not adequately shared with every member. This suggested that there could never be total impartiality in multi-agency working, as some partners were more equal than others and these tended to be the ones with resources.

It seemed inevitable tensions would arise when trying to be impartial in a multi-agency board. Although participants represented different agencies they still wanted to work in collaboration and respect each other's views. However individuals recognised that they held personal, professional and organisational beliefs, suggesting they were not always impartial.

Judgement

Plant suggests applying judgment is 'eliminable' as a gap will always exist between rules and their application. Plant sees 'vertical trust' as the confidence service users have in how judgment is exercised about them, and 'horizontal trust' as confidence required from others in one's own organisation (Plant, 2003: 564-5).

Although less data was gathered on judgement, this did not mean that it was not relevant to the board. A learning and skills member remarked that participants made judgements when the board had to make decisions, such as planning the use of resources. This comment was supported by another participant who believed that judgement connected to impartiality. He thought board members were, in reality, always partial and the right judgement only came out of discussions amongst them.

It was suggested by a council manager that judgment was relevant to the board. He stated that although interested in judgement as a concept, he was unsure how it would apply to the board. He thought impartiality would have a variety of uses at the board, but in reality people were effectively 'partial' and a final judgement would only arise out of discussions. He gave an example of the relationship between the council and a learning and skills agency that supported disabled young people as they moved into adulthood. There had been dissatisfaction with the amount of time central government had taken to review the agency's role as a nationally prescribed organisation. It was not possible for the board to be impartial about this issue, as it

had impinged on how the board made judgements on this area of work, and staff were uncertain about their future.

Key Finding

This third key findings section summarises what participants thought public service values were, as well as their views on what the list of selected 'traditional' public values (Appendix 1) meant for the board. This section relates to the research question 'what is the understanding of the PSE in a partnership board?'

By exploring PSE values in a board setting it was possible to see how they might apply to a multi-agency group. The findings may be compared with other research findings on the PSE in individual organisations and professions, developed in the next chapter.

Some values had more resonance with participants than others. Accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, public interest and motivation were discussed more readily, being easily understood. As a public value accountability seemed highly significant, understandable in terms of the numerous responsibilities of the board. These included accountability to different governance hierarchies and organisations, disabled children and parents, professions, as well as the board itself. Consequently, accountability could be confused. Remarks on accountability reflected the references to it in board documents, discussed earlier in this chapter.

Public values having less resonance with interviewees were loyalty, professionalism, trust, impartiality and judgment and discussing them proved challenging in a time limited interview. It seemed that values linking to familiar language may be easier to discuss, for example terms associated with partnership working. However, just because something was not voiced did not mean it was absent, or irrelevant. This suggests that values can be understood as being explicit, perhaps articulated in a partnership document, as well as being implicit, being present but unspoken.

How participants described the PSE values indicated that the values could be interpreted as helping the board to self-govern – having an inward facing function, as it were, as well as an outward facing function towards wider society. For example, an

inward facing view of motivation was joint working in the board, such as investing energy and resources to ensure continuing collaboration. Without the motivation to attend, read papers and work on projects there was a risk the board would be ineffective. In contrast, the outward facing understanding of motivation as a PSE value was to improve society, with a wider public interest to improve services for children and families. However, these issues also linked with each other, as some interviewees thought the governance mechanism of the board was primarily accountable to disabled children and parents.

Analysis of the data revealed an applied PSE - renamed the meso PSE in chapter 6 - explicating that public service values, such as the public interest and motivation, might be embodied in services or material objects. This is noteworthy as it highlights how the partnership board might contribute to implementing tangible activities in Midland City.

Lastly, an association between different public values was noted. For example, accountability linked to bureaucracy with an expectation that board plans had to be agreed by senior boards, such as the Children's Trust board, before implementation. This finding suggests more work is required on researching how public values relate to each other as well as their individual meaning.

PSE and the board - other suggested values

The findings here relate to the research question, 'In addition to the 'traditional' values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important?' Participants suggested a range of values including honesty, fairness, social justice and transparency - values not always cited in 'inventories' of public values but that might be associated with descriptions of the PSE. Additionally, values related to public service modernisation were advanced, including value for money and evidence based practice. The relationship between traditional and modern values highlighted a distinction between an 'old' and a 'modern' PSE, or traditional values being assimilated within a language of public service modernisation.

Reflecting the values in Appendix 1, being frank, honest, truthful and fair were proposed with social justice advanced as a key value linked to the public interest.

Social justice was identified as a value, illustrated as the needs of vulnerable people being uppermost in the work of the board. A further value advanced for public services, linked to social justice, was being a 'champion' for young people. It was remarked:

'I think it's an increasingly difficult country for young people to grow up in. [...] But it's about trying to make that as successful as possible, really, for kids. (17)

Being a champion for young people highlighted how this role could be a catalyst to uphold public values, for example the public interest, by specifically focusing on the needs of disabled children.

Social justice was thought to connect to equality in public service delivery, including equal opportunity statements, recruitment policies and service audits. Equality was considered crucial for working collaboratively by recognising power imbalances between professionals and users. Equality was described as being passionate about hearing users' voices and working with users in partnership rather than imposing or prescribing plans. Equality was suggested as particularly relevant for disabled children:

'...given it's a disabled children's board there needs to be something about the interests of the child being paramount'. (10)

Although using public values in a general way were crucial, they had to be applied to service users with specific needs such as disabled children. Referring to the *Children Act 1989* it was asserted that equality for disabled children was embodied in law. In that sense PSE values had both a specific meaning for the individual child, as well as strategic applications to wider society.

Another value that was proposed was the idea of public employee as a servant to local people, suggested by two participants who thought they worked for citizens:

‘It’s about giving something back, isn’t it, it’s about contributing to society. Life isn’t just there for what you can get out of it, you need to give as well, you know’. (07)

Being a servant was articulated as having a responsibility to improve wellbeing, health and quality of life in the community. One participant saw this as crucial because:

‘...as a local government officer I would want for communities out there the same things that I would want for myself – a good standard of living, good education, good housing, good transport...’ (01)

However, it was suggested public officers would still need to challenge how, as public servants, they defined need:

‘I’m very unhappy at the way that we’ve traditionally worked in creating services and then we try and fit people into those boxes, and I’m much more interested in looking at data and looking at epidemiology, understanding your population, and then creating, reconfiguring, services to meet the needs of that population, rather than having a set idea about what services you want and make people fit into that’. (19)

Lastly, an example of a political dimension was suggested by one participant who suggested:

‘I’ve got a rather socialist approach to the world, I’m quite reluctant going to the private sector because I distrust their motivation because the bottom line is there going to be profit’. (06)

This comment reflected the personal ethics of this participant in relationship to commissioning services from the private sector, as suggested in *Aiming High* policy (DCSF 2007: 67). Her remark hints at a wider question of whether the PSE was only pertinent to public organisations and professions or whether it could be assimilated by non-public agencies. This was further described by another participant:

‘I think there is a difference in terms of the motive which is more about the universal good rather than for profit, which can bring its own benefits but actually is a slightly different motive... So there’s a definite different type of culture. I actually think that if you are professionally trained often you’ve got a different perspective on what you’re trying to do, particularly in terms of commissioning than people who might be business trained... (12)

In addition to ‘traditional’ PSE values, values associated with public service modernisation were advanced. Several participants saw Midland City’s own ‘corporate’ values of success, excellence and belief as central to how council staff worked, from ‘dustbin men to the chief executive’. It was thought these values could be applied at the board and on enquiring how the local authority values were applied in a *multi-agency* board, it was suggested that:

‘...it’s incumbent on us within personal development reviews and so on, to show how we use the corporate values in our working. So whether it’s about having trust in your colleagues, whatever that means, right through to believing in, not just yourself, but in the work that you do, whether you try to do it in an excellent way... [...] And therefore it impacts on (XXXX) (multi-agency strategy involving partners)’. (02)

However, this did not mean the corporate values had been discussed at the board or would influence it, as they were:

‘...not necessarily conscious as a value based ‘thought doing process’ thing, but because as local authority workers we’re asked to incorporate them into our working practice [...] almost like some kind of mantra’. (02)

One can question the use of the word mantra here, as the description of applying the corporate values in practice indicated individual thought would still be needed to do this. Referring to the corporate values as a mantra suggested a contrast with a personal relationship to values associated with background and profession. However, as in other manifestations of modernised public service, including commissioning

and personalisation, it could be problematic to challenge a corporate position without risking one's role as employee. Additionally, if the board was to meet informally to reflect on its values, to what degree were the corporate values beyond critique or modification?

This same participant additionally saw the corporate values sitting comfortably alongside traditional PSE values rather than being separate from them. Comparing the values in the interview schedule in Appendix 1 with the corporate values, she said they reflected (my underlining):

‘...having a belief in yourself as a member of a public service that has a public interest. [...] Excellence in terms of a judgement about how you work, your motivation for what you do. Even your impartiality in terms of how you do it... Success, measured by in a sense your professionalism, how well you do things...’ (02)

Cross referencing the two sets of values identified several issues. Rather than a separation between traditional and modern values this participant saw no problem in combining them. This suggested the established PSE values may have been diluted or even superseded, with another reading that they had been rebranded, as it were, and assimilated into the modern values. In addition, she did not perceive a ‘territorial’ divide between the traditional and the modern. It was not stated what role these council values would have in a multi-agency board, or whether they would have a higher importance than other organisation's values, as it was a council led board.

Although several council participants welcomed the corporate values, others were more critical. One participant remarked:

‘...I think it's very hard undertaking (the corporate values) when you've got staff that are not very motivated and thinking their jobs at risk. So that's one element to (the corporate values) I struggle with’. (15)

She added that the values linked to managing employee performance in the council, an approach that had not been used before:

‘...I haven’t known that people have been managed in relation to their behaviours. And so that’s new for us to then start scrutinising people’s behaviours’. (15)

It was a new development for behaviour to be scrutinised in such a way and she said this related to Midland City Council becoming ‘electronic’. She described how information from six monthly employee reviews was inputted into computer software. Although it was time consuming collecting information from staff, she believed this was a positive development. This system scored an individual’s performance against whether they had achieved their objectives, informing levels of pay as well as scoring whether behaviour was ‘on a par’ with what Midland City expected of its employees.

Another ‘modern’ value suggested as useful for the board was value for money. A learning and skills representative noted:

‘...I think within, certainly when you sort of get into a little bit more, the strategic levels of management, then value for money is an absolute prerequisite for what you’re doing. And I think there is an impact that then has on the work of the board and the work that comes out of that’. (03)

Value for money was cited by other participants, who thought it reflected the public interest, for example how public money was invested to improve services. One participant said:

‘It’s not just about improving the public experience of it but the public value of it’. (06)

A senior manager asserted that an additional PSE value should be having a consumer focus:

‘...I think a consumer focus is high on the agenda. I think the partnership agenda is high on the agenda on the basis that we believe it will deliver better outcomes and experiences for young people and their families. It’s not a partnership agenda value for the sake of it. [...] So it all then goes back to the consumer’. (013)

This was backed up by an assertion that children’s voices were needed in the board. The same participant described how his skills for listening to children were not only informed by being a qualified social worker and local government manager, but because children and young people were his customers.

Other values associated with modernisation advanced by participants included ‘auditing’ services, or being ‘evidenced based. It was suggested that a pathway plan for disabled children needed to be ‘audited’ to ensure it was appropriate for use. The use of the term auditing here was not questioned, although one might associate it with financial management. This suggested that evidence is a contested concept, being defined and measured differently among the agencies represented at the board. However, another participant saw the focus on using evidence as crucial, particularly when funding was being reduced:

‘...evidence based, because I think, certainly with the Every Child Matters emphasis on better outcomes and using better evidence [...] and the tighter the budgets become the more important that becomes’. (19)

Comments suggested that being evidence based was not value free and officers would want to use evidence to promote projects and initiatives they were working on.

Lastly, although not suggested as a value by participants, it is noteworthy how frequently the word outcome was used in the interviews, and cited in the observation. The word signifies an aspiration to improve lives, and accordingly might be associated with the public interest. However, it seemed there was also a relationship between outcomes, monitoring and auditing services. For example, it was voiced in the observation that the board monitored the quality of its short break services using

a 'quarterly monitoring programme'. It was stated that this monitoring tool recorded who received services against nationally set outcomes for children. This suggested another link between the 'traditional' aspiration of working in the public interest and modernisation, linked to the previous discussion of auditing.

Key finding

This fourth and final key findings summary details other values considered relevant for the board and relates to question 3, 'In addition to the 'traditional' values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important for a board?'

What might be thought of as 'traditional' values were advanced by board members, for example honesty and fairness, as well as social justice and equality which were all thought applicable to the board as wider social values. From one perspective social justice and equality might be subsumed into other values, such as the public interest. However, they were thought worthy in their own right and were therefore separate from the inventories of values typically associated with the PSE.

This indicates that for the interviewees, some values may be more associated with the PSE than others. Existing research has discussed how public officers work within a commonly understood vocabulary, as if there was an agreed civil contract between public staff and their employer (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Plant, 2003). However, it is debatable whether this 'contract' exists as a static inventory and it seems that PSE values can be broadened out to include others.

In addition, values relating to 'public service modernisation' were provided, notably value for money, evidence based practice and asserting customer language. These may be interpreted as reflecting issues associated with NPM. Modern technologies and values were linked, seen by the Midland City corporate values being used in performance management. This seemed different to values being described as guiding principles for practice, or of significance to public officers.

It was understandable that senior managers would be influenced by the language of public policy as they planned strategy and implemented government guidelines. This led me to consider what happens to values influencing ones choice of a career in

public services. Comments suggested that at a personal level, critical views existed which conflicted with wider partnership strategy. As discussed, these included the practices of choosing not to procure services from private providers because of an allegiance to specific values, or questioning the Midland City Corporate values. This suggested an allegiance to traditional values continued to be relevant. Defining values as traditional and modern identified that there are ways of representing the relationship between old and modern values, discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

Summary of chapter 5

This chapter has reported the research findings on partnership working and the PSE. Part one was largely descriptive and set out the background to the fieldwork. In part two, the main interview findings on the PSE and partnership working were reported. These were organised in three sections: (1) board members' understanding of the PSE; (2) public service values and the board; (3) the PSE and the board - other values. The research findings from the fieldwork are now discussed in relation to the existing literature.

Chapter Six

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter considers the research questions and findings in relation to the literature discussed in chapter 2. Preparing the literature review and conducting the fieldwork was a relatively structured activity. In contrast, writing this discussion chapter presented a different challenge and although it would have been convenient to structure it in a similar way to the previous chapter, this risked inhibiting the emergence of new insights. The findings in chapter 5 suggest four areas requiring further discussion:

- The PSE and partnership working
- Values, the PSE and partnership working
- The importance of the PSE and partnership working
- The changing meaning of the PSE and its values

I respect that it is somewhat artificial dividing this chapter into four sections informed by the three questions. Although this has been done to assist the reader, I acknowledge there will be some blurring between the sections. Furthermore, the research questions refer to both the *meaning* and the *role* of the PSE. By meaning I mainly refer to the individual participant, their background and practice. By role I refer to how the PSE assists board governance and strategic developments.

Let us remind ourselves that the overarching aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between partnership working and the PSE in a multi-agency board. The research questions are:

- What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?
- What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?
- In addition to the ‘traditional’ values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important by board participants?

The PSE and partnership working

Research on the PSE and partnership working has tended to focus on the relationship between PPPs and contracting-out public services to the private sector. For example, Hebson et al. (2003) discussed how the delivery of public services in PPPs had transformed traditional public sector values. However, although ‘partnership working’ was at the centre of their research they did not engage with other descriptions of it, for example public partnership working typically found in Children’s Trusts (DCSF, 2008).

Furthermore, there has been a tendency for the PSE to be researched in single organisations and professions rather than in collaborative settings. For Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) the public interest was described as local authority public servants extending their interest beyond the boundaries of organisation and profession to serve the ‘public good’ (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641-2). However, their research did not state that ‘extending an interest’ might equally be described as collaboration with other public agencies, for example health and education.

Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation it is crucial to hold onto the reality that research on the PSE has largely ignored what we think of as partnership working and that the relationship between values and a multi-agency board has been overlooked. The first part of the following discussion ‘The meaning of the PSE in the board’, focuses on the personal reasons why board members entered public service and the ‘value base’ they brought from their own backgrounds. The role of the PSE in the board is then addressed.

The meaning of the PSE in the board: the micro, macro and meso PSE

The discussion which follows relates to my research question ‘What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?’ The term PSE was not cited in the documents or at the observation, although at interview most participants had heard of it with different ways to describe it advanced. These included the PSE as meaningful for

individual public staff, that a shared definition of it existed across public services, as well as the view that it could vary in different settings.

My findings are consistent with previous descriptions of the PSE discussed in chapter 2. It has been remarked that the term PSE can be taken for granted (Lawton, 2005: 239) as well as being used differently with ‘elasticity’ as a term (Needham, 2007: 76). For example, Needham describes the term PSE as used to signify the commitment of public sector employees; to defend traditional public services; as a way of working that needs to be informed by private sector values; and that the PSE can be both negative and obstructive (Needham 2007). However, describing the PSE in this way suggests it might only be understood as something traditional that is challenged by modernisation. Framing change to the PSE in this dualistic manner means that other ways to theorise it may be overlooked. For example, the PSE is thought of as multi-dimensional (Plant, 2003) and I argue there are other ways to interpret it. Building on this, the theory of the *micro*, *macro* and *meso* PSE is now discussed developing from my research findings and informed by the wider literature.

The micro, macro and meso PSE

The theory of the micro, macro and meso PSE is informed by previous research on pro-social behaviour, described as ‘a broad category of acts that are defined by some significant segments of society and/or one’s social group as generally beneficial to other people’ (Penner et al., 2005: 366). Although Penner et al. write from a psychological perspective their framework provides a way to theorise these three levels of the PSE, distinct from the dualism of traditional public administration and modernisation perspectives.

The key idea I take from Penner et al. is the description of a multi-level perspective to analyse pro-social behaviour, which is applied to my findings. For example, they discuss the ‘meso’ level, about ‘helper-recipient’ dyads in the context of a specific situation; the ‘micro’ level regarding pro-social tendencies; and the ‘macro’ level about pro-social actions occurring within the context of groups and organisations. Building on their theory, my findings pointed to a *micro PSE* linking to the personal

and biographical meaning of the PSE. In addition, the *macro PSE* articulates wider or shared conceptions of the PSE and the *meso PSE* reflects discussion at an ‘applied’ level, for example in service delivery. The three perspectives are detailed in Table 3 below and I suggest they assist an understanding of the PSE described as difficult to articulate (Lawton, 2005: 238) as well as informing its relationship with partnership working.

Table 3 – Macro, micro and meso PSE (adapted from Penner et al., 2005)			
Name	Description	Meaning	Relationship with partnership working
Micro PSE	Deeply held for individual.	Personal	Commitment to working in public services imported into the context of the multi-agency board.
Macro PSE	Wider or shared description of the PSE.	Shared	The board has a shared public purpose within the group.
Meso PSE	Application of the PSE in practice, for example at an interpersonal level or embodied in the environment.	Applied	The board identifies specific actions and suggested outcomes to further the public interest identified in tangible/concrete decisions.

Firstly, the *micro PSE* describes a personal meaning and commitment to working in public services taken to the board by its members. For Penner et al. the micro perspective is informed by evolutionary theory, biological and genetic bases of action, developmental processes, and personality (Penner et al., 2003: 369). My approach to the micro PSE focuses on the biographical origins of this perspective, as well as an individual’s choice to work in the public sector, such as in social work and teaching.

The discussion in chapter 2 saw biography and background as important for public service workers (Perry and Wise, 1990; Perry, 1997). My findings closely link to such research on the antecedents of PSM. Furthermore, the ‘calling’ or ‘coming’ to public service has been identified in previous research on the origins of care workers’

backgrounds and choice of career (Brannen, 2007; Cree and Davis, 2007) or as the choice of social work as a career (Cree and Davis, 2007: 26-29).

Lacking such a 'calling' was rare for my interviewees. For example, my findings suggested that the motivation to work in public services linked to personal, professional, political and religious influences, as identified in the work of Perry (1997) who discussed the individual antecedents of PSM. Perry stated a number of influences informed PSM, including the influence of family and parental background, political belief, religion, identification with a particular profession and an individual's demographic characteristics.

Although my findings largely corresponded with Perry's antecedents, further factors informing the micro PSE were identified in my research. The influence of community was stated as important, and although the concept of community was not explained by interviewees it can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, as a wish to 'serve' the community, articulated by the interviewee who said he joined the Scouts because of its public service element. Here, community seemed to imply a wider focus on the public interest. Secondly, as a third of Midland city's inhabitants were from black and minority ethnic communities (Audit Commission, 2009) the concept of community might be considered to be the relationship between ethnicity, faith and community and its role as an antecedent of PSM.

One interviewee stated that his own problems with dyslexia at school were influential in choosing to work with disabled children. This suggests that an event in one's own life might be formative in wishing to help future generations, suggesting that an act of omission in an individual's biography can become an act of commission by using it to help others. This links to what has been termed the psychical and emotional roots of commitment (Hoggett et al., 2006a). Moreover, research participants' own understanding of the PSE contrasted with depictions of 'loyal' officers working within public institutions. For instance, one participant said she 'enjoyed' the PSE, interpreted by me as the satisfaction obtained by applying a deeply held ethic to her work (Hoggett et al., 2006a: 689). The use of such an emotional word was important as it contrasted with the image of the stereotyped

officer placing rationality over emotion as 'a marginal mode of experience to be minimized in routine organisational life' (Putnam and Mumby, 1993: 41).

Lastly, with senior managers as the focus of my research, the micro PSE linked to research on the relationship between change and continuity for identity and career (Brannen et al., 2007: 39-57). This reflects how a personal motivation and conviction to work in public services can continue for senior managers, even if they have not recently performed front line duties. In my research, participants thought the PSE was probably stronger for front line workers, early career staff and lower management, when compared with senior managers. My findings corresponded with John and Johnson's observation that an affiliation between the PSE and younger people existed (John and Johnson, 2008: 114). In contrast, Pratchett and Wingfield noted that when compared with newer staff, those who had worked longer in public services were found to have a greater allegiance to the PSE. From this perspective, other interviewees thought their values had not changed, but the responsibilities of being a manager might require strategic rather than client centered approaches to delivering services.

In sum, the micro PSE contributes to a more nuanced understanding of public staff, than the stereotyped portrayal of an officer in a public organisation, therefore countering the 'absence of individuals in most recent social and political theory' (Hoggett et al., 2006a: 689). It provides a different perspective to the PSE described as something impersonal or solely the domain of large public organisations and institutions, discussed next as the *macro PSE*.

Secondly, for the *macro PSE*, two issues arose from the data - participants' descriptions of a 'wider' or 'shared' PSE for public servants and the relationship of the macro PSE with the board as a distinct group. For Penner et al. the macro level describes pro-social behaviours performed by individuals within an 'organisational' context (Penner et al., 2005: 375). In my research, the macro perspective was articulated as a wider or shared manifestation of the PSE, suggesting it was something perceived as broad, bound by defined structures or through a set of shared values. This built on similar views of the PSE described as 'long-established values and rules providing a benchmark for public servants and their institutions' (PASC,

2002: 7). This portrays a common understanding of the PSE by public servants but my findings identified different views, suggesting that in reality the picture was more complex. For example, my findings suggest that the PSE is articulated as 'shared and institutionalised' in the public sector but at the same time acknowledges that it varies within different parts of it.

However, it would be impossible to define where these macro boundaries lay, or the exact correspondence between the macro and the micro PSE, with difficulties delineating what is personal, organisational and professional. Kernaghan (1992: 16) stated that public officials apply principles and standards to their actions, but this seems to suggest that officials only follow agreed values. Furthermore, if, as Hoggett et al. suggest, officers possess a deeply held ethic (Hoggett et al., 2006a: 689) this raises questions about the function of documents describing the core values and standards of behaviour for public servants, for instance professional codes (Nolan, 1995; Civil Service Code, 2010) when in reality boards are populated by diverse individuals with different motivations.

Moreover, if a macro view of the PSE implies the existence of a generally agreed and collectivised spirit for public servants, it can be argued this connects to my second research question 'What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?' In their explication of the macro, Penner et al. briefly refer to 'group-level' pro-social action and co-operation involving two or more people coming together as partners (Penner et al., 2005: 380-381). Although their research took place from a psychological perspective, the attention to pro-social behaviour and groups has similarities with my research.

For example, when asked to describe the board, the majority of interviewees described its role as planning and implementing services for disabled children and families. It was identified that not everyone understood its business in the same way or that they had identical motivations for attending. However, experienced at working collaboratively, board members extended an interest beyond their organisation or profession for the 'public good' (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641). Whereas the board members attended a multi-agency board as a normative expectation in contemporary policy making, Pratchett and Wingfield's description of

‘extending an interest’ beyond organisation and profession suggests that the organisation was paramount to the partnership. This raised questions about whether the agencies attending multi-agency boards are ‘mono-organisational’ or dependent on collaborative activity, or indeed whether the partnership was in some way an organisation itself.

Finally, the *meso PSE* refers to how the PSE is employed in practice. Describing the PSE as something that can be applied sounds odd, but is best described as implementing the public interest. This understanding is informed by Penner’s description of pro-social behaviour as one person helping another at an interpersonal level, with the motivation to support others applied in a specific practice, for example by means of empathy (Penner et al.; 2003: 366-69). In my study I interpreted the meso in two ways - by the use of ‘outcome’ based terminology and with references to specific and focused tasks arising from strategic decisions.

Firstly, a key focus for the meso perspective is the association between the PSE, partnership working and the pursuit of positive ‘outcomes’ discussed in chapter 2. This was referred to in the findings chapter with generic references to achieving, delivering and monitoring outcomes for children in order that these outcomes became ‘better’. Although working within the policy context of ECM and AHDC, participants appeared to apply ‘normative’ definitions of outcome with no critical analysis of its meaning, applying the ‘Every Child Matters brand’ unquestionably (Hoyle 2008: 2). However, as Willis suggests, defining what outcome means is ‘difficult, confusing and practically impossible’ (Willis 2001: 9) and it was not always clear what it meant for the board.

For instance, although pursuing the public interest was described as improving services to enhance outcomes, participants did not describe how the concept of ‘outcome’ can be understood differently. The relationship between the *meso PSE* and outcomes can be informed by ‘change outcomes’, for example improvements to an individual’s physical and emotional health; and ‘maintenance outcomes’ to prevent or delay a deterioration in the health, well-being or quality of life of an individual (Dickinson, 2008: 7-9). However, where the concept of the meso PSE is more tangible is in relation to Dickinson’s description of ‘service process outcomes’

related to how a service is delivered, seen in the board planning the use of resources for disabled children. Whereas such a focus on service might be thought to be targeted at individual children, the findings suggested the public interest might be manifested in practice by means of providing clubs and play schemes. This links to Lawton's observation that although described as an abstract ideal, the public interest can be realised in 'concrete' decisions (Lawton et al., 2013: 31-34) indicating that the PSE is not just a theoretical notion, but can be manifested in service delivery.

Nonetheless, I do not think this goes far enough to describe how the PSE is manifested in tangible actions. The key example of this for the meso PSE was the description in the findings of providing accessible toilets for disabled children in the city centre. These new facilities were described as being larger and better equipped than standard accessible toilets for disabled children and it was stated that they would improve social inclusion. Although improving toilets might, on first hearing, appear banal it seems that in practice the meso PSE and the public interest could be manifested in an asset providing a legacy for the community. In other words these facilities gave life to social inclusion, as well as other values voiced by participants in the findings

In summary, the micro, macro and meso theory of the PSE provides an opportunity to reflect on what the PSE means in a complex partnership board. It is suggested that the meso perspective is less helpful than the macro and micro perspectives (Perry and Hondeghe, 2008: 5), but my findings suggest it has the potential to be valuable for understanding how the public interest is manifested in practice when applied in concrete decisions and actions. Furthermore it supports the view that more attention is needed on the 'loose-coupling' of the PSE and strategic and operational goals (Lawton, 2005: 239).

The role of the PSE in the board

This discussion refers to the 'public value' a board working in collaboration might aspire to collectively achieve. It is linked to the question 'What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?' and informed by the theory of 'public value management' (PVM) discussed in chapter 2 (Erridge, 2007; Stoker, 2006; Jorgenson and Bozeman, 2007; Benington and Moore, 2010). Advocates of PVM see

value in the public realm as different to the commercial sector (Stoker 2006: 46). However, as interpretations of public value vary it is difficult to measure or define (Erridge, 2007: 1029-1030), and includes issues associated with public administration, democracy and citizen participation, as well as organisational efficiency (Stoker, 2006: 46; Jorgenson and Bozeman, 2007).

In chapter 3 it was noted that the previous two decades have seen local government increasingly working alongside other agencies, with multi-agency partnerships growing in prominence. It is suggested that partnership working can provide better integrated services for local people' (DH, 1998: 10), suggesting some sort of value will transpire. Facilitating this, partnership boards are described as developing vision, governance and strategy (DCSF, 2008: 8); directing policy (Dudau, 2009); achieving 'decisional coherence' (Glasby and Peck, 2004: 5); managing issues that do not fit neatly together (Cornforth, 2003); and providing social and symbolic roles for organisational cohesion (Glasby and Peck, 2004: 6). My findings identified similar roles for the board, including providing leadership in Midland City in order to plan disabled children's services collaboratively; acting as a link with other professional and governance networks; as well as providing opportunities to consult with disabled children and parents.

A key expectation was that board activity would lead to improved outcomes, suggesting value might develop from the collaboration. This indicated a link between the macro PSE at the board and the meso PSE. However, the micro PSE also informed public value, stated as linking with altruism, human dignity and acting in the interest of others (Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007: 362). However, as the term public value - or indeed any notion of value - was not used by participants, it is unclear if they were aware of it. Instead, the word outcome (Willis 2001: 9) was regularly used, suggesting an association between the PSE, partnership working and the pursuit of positive 'outcomes' for children. However, it was difficult to understand how public value created by the board could be evidenced when compared with measuring performance as a feature of NPM (Hood, 1995; Lawton et al., 2013: 30-31). There was perhaps more resonance to be found in the value of things that could be witnessed or seen - manifested in service delivery and financial expenditure – rather than in their measurement.

Networks of 'deliberation and delivery' are additionally stated as contributing to public value. This involves a different understanding of the public interest by involving citizens in policy making, stated as democratic when compared with public administration and NPM (Stoker, 2006: 42). This could be inferred by the involvement of parents at the board and describing them as important partners in their strategies, plans and terms of reference. Value was additionally obtained from a cross fertilisation of networks, for example the parent representative meeting with other parents in the community to bring their views back to the board. Involving external representatives in boards - such as parents - is described by Cornforth (2003) as a democratic perspective. He states this will have a political angle, in this setting corroborated by an elected councillor's being responsible for disabled children's strategy, but also by citizens who were also voters attending the board. In this sense, PVM linked to the public interest, suggesting that the challenge 'for public managers is to engage the public in a dialogue about their preferences but in a way that allows for deliberation about choices and alternatives' (Stoker, 2006: 51).

However, Stoker's observations do not consider how collaboration can be undermined when some participants have less power. Power is key to how authority is manifested in public boards as a means to define and influence the diversity of tasks undertaken. The board's use of a formal agenda to sequence events and practices (Freeman and Peck, 2007: 916) was similar to Cornforth's *managerial hegemony* theory, providing legitimacy for managerial actions, as well as Lukes (2005) 'one-dimensional' view of power describing overt decision making where clear outcomes of decisions are recorded. Also related to power is 'positionality', associated with power relations (Franks, 2001) manifested in participants' status or force of personality in a board. For example, if parent board members did not have the opportunity or confidence to challenge poor decision making, their attendance might not be beneficial to effective strategic work. Although this was not stated in the data, concern was raised that agencies could make deals among themselves without user involvement.

The concept of power has further implications for a multi-agency board. It was stated that a councillor's interest in the board could result in the council's priorities having more emphasis than those of their partners. Although motivation to improve services

collaboratively suggests 'value' followed, it was stated that partners might be reluctant to share finances. This indicated that a 'mono-organisational' approach to public administration could undermine the pursuit of 'value', with such differences of opinion reported in the data as a reluctance to share money or align budgets.

A further example of the relationship between partnership working and PVM is the emphasis given to a wide range of interventions and networks of provision (Stoker 2006: 42) with 'non-state' partners (Benington and Moore, 2010) fostering closer relationships between public services, procurement processes and contractors (Stoker 2006: 48). This was identified in Midland City's 'Short Breaks Strategy 2009 - 2011' with its aspiration to seek a variety of provision, including services provided by the voluntary sector. However, although it is widely stated that the private sector has increased its role in delivering public services (Grout, 2009: 5) it was not possible to identify the extent of non-state activity procured by the board. Compared to studies where the main focus on the PSE and partnership working is contracting-out (Grimshaw et al., 2002; Hebson et al., 2003), a different picture was identified in my study. This links to two issues. Firstly, that the focus on the contracting out of public services needs to allow for the fact that public agencies continue to provide many services themselves. This was stated in Sullivan and Skelcher's (2002) *optimistic*, *pessimistic* and *realist* perspectives of collaboration (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). For instance, the *pessimist* perspective identified how partners preserve or enhance power, placing personal or organisational gain above partners. This was reflected in my study where participants reported the same reluctance amongst agencies to share budgets. Furthermore Hudson notes that although external factors may necessitate collaboration, including changes to society or legislation, organisations will still need to protect their resources to fulfil legislative and policy requirements (Hudson, 1987).

PVM is also associated with public service values with Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) suggesting they are needed to underpin the behaviour of public sector employees to contribute public value (Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007). Furthermore, it is stated that if no one sector has a monopoly on the PSE and a range of agencies is involved, it is essential that different agencies *share values* to outline the 'public' (Stoker, 2006: 44). However sharing values does not necessarily happen instinctively and my research found that there had been no opportunities to discuss them.

Although Chapman's states values are central to public working (1993c), it might be wrongly assumed that a shared value base exists. Of course, sharing values does not happen by itself. Several interviewees reported that they had never had an opportunity to discuss their values, either at the board or at other points in their careers. This was curious given the stated importance of core values and standards of behaviour for public servants, for instance professional codes (Nolan, 1995; Civil Service Code, 2010). This suggests a lack of correspondence between the authors of such documents and staff in public services, a theme returned to later in this chapter.

Values, the PSE and partnership working

This section continues the discussion of the role of the PSE in the board by focusing on public service values. The complexity of applying public service values in collaboration is considered, linking to the discussion of *values and public service* in chapter 2, as well as drawing on some of the literature in relation to governance and partnerships. Stated as central to public services there is a tradition of using values to investigate the PSE in organisations and professions (Chapman 1993c; Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Plant 2003).

Values and the PSE

It has been questioned if it is possible to define the PSE (Lawton, 2005: 239) as it is used in different ways, having elasticity as a term (Needham, 2007: 76). The PSE has been researched empirically by using public service values used to theorise it. This approach builds on previous work (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996), whose work suggests a generic PSE acting as a common denominator for the numerous organisational and professional groups in local government. Both Pratchett and Wingfield's work, as well as Plant (2003), link closely to my research by providing nine values used in my fieldwork. These were accountability; bureaucratic behaviour; public interest; motivation; loyalty; professionalism; trust; impartiality; and judgment.

At interview each value was not consistently understood or discussed. However, as stated in chapter 5, just because participants did not discuss a value in detail, for example trust, this did not mean it was not there. Perhaps, as Rhodes states, trust was

assumed (Rhodes 2007: 1246), but this does lead one to consider how trust might be embedded in partnership working (Lawton 2005: 238; Davies 2011: 6). In contrast, some values were more meaningful for participants, namely accountability, bureaucracy, the public interest and motivation which are now discussed.

The four main values: accountability, bureaucracy, the public interest and motivation
The findings suggested that *accountability* was thought to be to organisations, councillors, to the board and to service users. Accountability was additionally stated as being to one's profession, for example 'collegiate' accountability to a professional body, argued by Johnson (1972) as augmenting professional power.

The standard definition of accountability in local government is accepting the legitimacy of political structures (Pratchett and Wingfield 1996: 641-2). A clear point of accountability is plausible in single organisations but fits less well with partnership working with partnership working requiring responsiveness to diverse stakeholders (Lawton, 2005). Building on this, my findings indicated that linear accountability was more complex in a partnership setting with different organisational and governance priorities not fitting neatly with board processes.

Defining complexity and accountability, Newman (2008) describes 'accountability of whom', 'accountability for what', 'accountability to whom' and 'accountability through what means'. Different interpretations of accountability were provided by participants with examples of accountability to *whom* most prevalent. The data suggests that the final point of accountability is unclear, compared with Pratchett and Wingfield's statement of it as local political structures. Accountability was not just hierarchical but additionally horizontal to peers and citizens.

Transformations to governance arrangements were identified in the extensive multi-agency partnership working and found in and outside of the board. For example, a council board member thought that she was accountable to her employer rather than the board questioning how non-council agencies could be accountable there. A non-council board member stated that they too were accountable to their employer but not to elected politicians as council employees. An education participant was not

even sure if the board was accountable to the council at all. Such uncertainty is associated with changes in governance, as distinct from government, reflecting an increased involvement of a plurality of actors pursuing common policy goals through networks (Kjaer, 2004: 3). Although partners in the Children's Trust and boards associated with it co-operated to develop policy and services strategically, they were accountable to their own agencies. In this sense, partnership working challenged traditional ideas of accountability, with each organisation having to remain autonomous (Lawton, 2005).

Fenwick et al. (2012) similarly notes that partnerships are accountable to government, elected councillors, organisations, as well as internally to partnerships themselves. My data suggested that the board regularly deferred decisions as it had no accountability in its own right. Furthermore, the chair did not manage all partners or have authority to direct them (Parston and Steele, 2003). These examples suggested participants interpreted definitions of accountability as hierarchical, but negotiable (Chapman, 2000: 228). It has been suggested that compromise is needed to manage this complexity (Lawton, 2005) and accountabilities in public organisations will influence the shape of 'co-governance' in partnerships, rather than accepting that organisations are equal (Fenwick et al., 2012).

Another view of accountability revealed in the research was of 'collegiate' accountability (Johnson, 1972) augmenting professional power. For instance, one participant said she was ultimately answerable to the General Medical Council and one could see this affiliation might underpin an individual's decision making within a partnership. However, it was unclear how collegiate membership contributed to accountability there, in addition to the asymmetrical accountability relationships associated with partnership governance (Fenwick et al., 2012).

Some interviewees thought the board was primarily accountable to disabled children and parents, as well the wider public. Involving parents of disabled children suggested a *democratic perspective* (Cornforth, 2003: 12) with boards bringing participants together from different backgrounds but to represent the interests of a specific group. While Cornforth noted the importance of involving outside representatives, parents in this board had less influence than professionals. For

example, when the professional board members failed to carry out an action it was stated they were rarely challenged and it was unclear how parents would assert their authority in these situations.

In summary, as a PSE value, accountability was significant for the board, linking to the Children's Trust, politicians, employers, professions, as well as children and parents. A shared understanding of accountability may potentially be helpful but whether it can be clearly defined is questionable, as it is difficult to point to a single line of accountability. As Chapman states, although the meaning of public accountability can be debated the answers cannot be of the 'once and for all time' variety (Chapman, 2000: 228).

The second value discussed here, *bureaucratic behaviour*, sees public servants demonstrating characteristics of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641). Lawton notes that bureaucracy and accountability link by means of an obedience to organisational objectives, adding that the internal structures of individual organisations have changed in the direction of flatter, less bureaucratic arrangements working with a range of partners (Lawton, 2005: 236). Although this was identified in my research with horizontal multi-agency working between partners, hierarchical bureaucratic structures remained to senior boards including the Children's Trust. Fenwick et al. described this extension of bureaucratic control among partnerships as 'meta-bureaucracy' (Fenwick et al., 2012: 417).

In addition to the bureaucracy found in the organisations and institutions associated with the board, bureaucracy could be associated with the design of documents and records used there. For instance, actions from previous meetings could be forgotten among paperwork and processes, deferred or even deleted if their reason was forgotten. This was identified in chapter 5 where some items in an 'historic actions record' were removed as no one could remember why they were there. This finding led me to consider if the progress of actions, or inaction, from board meetings always contributed to the public interest.

It was also suggested that the board was a bureaucratic 'show piece' with its contribution to improving front line practice unclear. As board agenda items were usually strategic, this was reminiscent of Cornforth's 'managerial hegemony theory' (Cornforth, 2003: 10-11) describing the symbolic role of rubber stamping board agenda items to provide legitimacy for managerial action. It was questioned if board processes always contributed to improving services and it was thought the amount of paperwork there might undermine its core business. It was not clearly articulated what this core business was but it could be inferred that in-depth analysis, rather than allegiance to process, might lead to improved outcomes. However, perhaps this bureaucratic process *was* a key part of the core business, necessary to sustain the existing governance networks and structures.

My participants voiced negative and positive views on bureaucracy, thinking it could undermine the board's work but acknowledging that it played an important role. This builds on Pratchett and Wingfield's observations in their research (1996) that some public officers see the PSE positively while others associate it with red tape, encouraging inefficiency, obstructive behaviour and 'petty bureaucracy' (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 645). Of course, access to public services requires some form of bureaucracy to manage scarce resources and determine levels of need to ensure requests from the public are treated equally.

In sum, working in complex organisations was familiar to research participants and it can be contended that the relationship between the PSE and bureaucracy was an important feature of partnership working. Although Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) characterised the relationship between bureaucratic behaviour and public staff as honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity, it is problematic trying to link this description of bureaucracy to practice in the board. Although it can be assumed that Pratchett and Wingfield's portrayal of bureaucracy informed the board's work the additional difficulties of managing interlocking bureaucracies there undoubtedly challenged mono-organisational perspectives. This builds on Lawton's (2005) suggestion that the rise of partnership working requires being responsive to a range of different stakeholders. To be responsive and progress the public interest it seemed board participants would have to engage with bureaucracy in a creative and assertive manner.

The third value discussed in relation to the question ‘What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?’ is the *public interest*. The public interest has legal, democratic and social meaning, such as citizens as taxpayers, or specific groups such as disabled children. However, it is a debated term as what is in the ‘interest’ of one section of society, for instance a service for a family, may not be in the interest of the general tax payer.

Although participants did not use the term the public interest, references to it included improving services for disabled children and families, arguably the public they were ‘interested’ in. The public interest has been described as public servants extending an interest beyond the boundaries of their organisation or profession to serve the ‘public good’ (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641). Although Pratchett and Wingfield’s emphasis implies going outside of organisation into the ‘community’, rather than undertaking multi-agency partnership working, it can be widened out as attending a board to plan services for the public. For board members, stepping *outside* of their organisations and professions was seen in their collaboration with staff from other agencies. Strategic examples of the public interest were advanced, notably planning services informed by users’ needs, although it was remarked that insufficient time had been spent doing this.

Furthermore, discussions about the ‘*outside*’ of organisation and profession can be associated with strategic decisions relating to a population, for example disabled children, or specifically to a single child. The two positions are associated and as Lawton says, it is important that attention is focused on the ‘loose-coupling’ between strategic and operational goals (Lawton, 2005: 239). Also, in the spirit of *Every Child Matters* (2003) one participant said the board wanted the same opportunities for disabled children as non-disabled children, giving the impression the board had one ‘interest’.

Both strategic and practice focused relationships between the public interest and service users was implied by the use of the word outcome (Willis, 2001 Dickinson, 2008). Regarding *strategy*, recent discussions on commissioning (Commissioning Support Programme, 2009; Glasby, 2012) relate to this, described as ‘...the set of

activities, which enable commissioners to make decisions about how best to use the total resources available in order to improve outcomes' (Commissioning Support Programme, 2009). A *practice* focused public interest was seen in the provision of accessible toilets for disabled children, linking back to the earlier discussion of the *meso* PSE. However, a pragmatic wish to 'get things done' potentially conflicted with strategic approaches that promised wider and deeper changes which took longer to implement. Furthermore, a push to evidence what had been achieved potentially conflicted with the shorter term performance indicators each organisation had to demonstrate. This suggested there might be some tensions between the need to produce value, as demonstrated by PVM, compared with measuring performance. There was a risk that a partnership 'outcomes led' approach might be moulded to organisations and professions above the public interest.

A further manifestation of the public interest and the PSE was articulated in relation to how services consulted children, young people and parents (TDC, 2011). One interviewee stated that the main focus for the public interest should be disabled children but it was suggested it could be linked to carers, for example parents attending the board. The parent representatives regularly met with a wider group of parents in the community, bringing their views back to the board to inform policy making. Involving parents in this way can be contrasted with Pratchett and Wingfield's statement (1996: 641) that public servants may second guess the needs of the community when planning the public interest. However, increasing stakeholder perspectives into multi-agency policy making will inevitably increase complexity. Conflict can arise where stakeholders see a policy as mostly their responsibility, or policy is diluted because of the different requirements of partners (Hudson, 2006).

It seems that the public interest has distinct meanings for the different professions involved in multi-agency working. This is because different philosophies of how the public are cared for exist, such as the approach of a cure-orientated medic contrasted to a health visitor's public health role (Daly, 2004: 78). This was identified in the discussion on the meaning of the PSE in chapter 5, where differences in professional backgrounds were thought to influence how the PSE was understood. For example, an educational participant believed there were differences in how social services and

schools worked with children and young people. However, opportunities will exist for professionals to influence each other's values and perspectives (Frost and Robinson, 2004: 21-25) with partnership working leading to personally benefits for participants (Frost, 2005: 6-7).

For the PSE and the board, the fourth and final value of *motivation* is associated with partnership working, not only as a desire to undertake rewarding work but the need to meet with other professionals to improve services. At interview, board members spoke positively about attending meetings, communicating a high level of mutual agreement. Participants attended not only to develop services, but to obtain information and resources, develop networks, further careers, or they were simply directed to attend. Hudson states that public officers can be *directed* to collaborate by government (1987) but participants in this study did not state that they had been forced to go to board meetings with attendance accepted as a requirement of the job.

Attending the board for strategic reasons was thought essential to plan and develop services for disabled children in Midland City. Relating to this, Hudson (1987) refers to three strategies informing partnership working: mutual agreement, 'bribing' partners with incentives (for example by offering access to a grant); or partners being directed to attend. The interviews suggested that *mutual agreement* was the main reason for attending, to ensure there was leadership in disabled children's services. This was expressed as a necessary responsibility but one that could be relinquished if required. This was because there was no mandatory requirement to attend or even to hold the board compared with for example, the establishment of a Local Safeguarding Children Board (Children Act 2004). The board had been established voluntarily in Midland City in order to provide leadership for disabled children's services. Consequently, a mutual agreement to attend lent itself to what Sullivan and Skelcher term the *optimistic* perspective of collaboration, leading to improvements from collaborating over gain for the individuals involved (2002: 37-41).

With the lack of any shared financial resources and reflecting Hudson's reference to strategic *incentives*, several 'incentivising' motivations can be identified. To attend meetings was to be party to the collaboration - not to be left out - as well as to secure some of the non-financial 'value' that followed. Such value might be described as the

search for synergy in joint processes and cross fertilisation. For instance, Williams (2002) identified how individual ‘boundary spanners’ use their skills and experience to enhance interpersonal relationships within policy processes. This was seen by a local authority representative who suggested that she was a key ‘strategic’ person promoting the inclusion of disabled children when the initial core group that became the board commenced. However, incentives to attend could additionally be described as being a ‘node’ (Williams, 2002: 117), reporting board business back to other meetings and networks. This implied that information gathered at the board was itself a useful resource and not being up-to-date put services and networks connected to the board at a disadvantage. This speaks to what Sullivan and Skelcher name a *pessimist* perspective, with partners preserving or enhancing their power, placing personal or organisational gain above partners (2002: 37-41).

Furthermore, the established view of the PSE and motivation is that individuals do not enter public service out of self-interest or personal utility maximisation (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641; John and Johnson, 2008: 108-9; Plant, 2003: 562). However, Le Grand suggests that public officers are not always motivated by altruism and the public interest (Le Grand, 1997: 158), a position informed by public choice theory arguing that public officials are self-interested agents (Crouch, 2011: 62). Although it was acknowledged that some members might attend boards to advance their careers, this was not identified as a significant issue by participants. While the interview data pointed to a high level of co-operation, it can be assumed that the reasons for attending boards are complex. For instance, it was suggested that officers would not ‘go into something strategic’ unless benefit was to be found there for one’s organisation. This can be associated with Le Grand’s work on public servants and the categories of knights, knaves, pawns and queens (Le Grand, 1997; 2004). Whereas officers responsible for providing public services are described as working in the public interest, Le Grand suggests they can be knaves, motivated more by their own self-interest. If an officer had developed a service, or wished to protect it one could see how they might wish to protect the resources available to support the public interest and the children they worked with.

In sum, it appeared that participants had both altruistic and self-interested motivations for engaging in partnership working, best described as *optimistic* and

pessimistic perspectives for attending the board. However, the findings indicated a high level of positive engagement.

The inward and outward roles of the values

Pratchett notes that when values are clearly articulated in an organisation there is little ambiguity about them, but the diversity of agencies and organisations in modern governance calls into question how far it is possible to design shared standards and values (Pratchett, 2000: 113-5). Such ambiguity identified in the research linked to the question ‘What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?’ specifically what I term the inward and outward role of PSE values. To demonstrate these two roles I return to the values of accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, the public interest and motivation.

An *inward* looking function for accountability as a board value, or what Fenwick et al. call internal accountability (Fenwick et al., 2012), was implied by participants not always recognising or respecting the need to be answerable at the board. Accountability was stated as linked to different governance hierarchies and organisations, disabled children and parents, professions, as well as the board. A similar finding was identified by Fenwick et al. in the partnerships they studied and although they identified internal accountability, traditional bureaucratic processes remained to partners’ organisations. Fenwick et al. termed these relationships asymmetrical, which can be applied to my own findings with board partners representing their own bureaucracies in a similar way. In this sense accountability to *whom* was unclear (Newman, 2008: 252). This was inferred by a local authority participant stating their primary accountable was to the council, but questioned how non-council agencies could be held accountable, indicating that multi-agency accountability was itself unclear and not a ready-made formula (Chapman, 2000: 227).

Furthermore, it was problematic determining the bounds of inward and outward facing *bureaucratic behaviour*. It is inevitable that when working in partnership different professionals will use technical language related to their profession or organisation. This can be challenging in a multi-agency board, evidenced by reports that terminology used by some participants was not always understood. In addition,

when presenting recommendations or trying to resolve issues, reports using jargon can see professional differences ‘collide’ in multi-agency working if knowledge is taken for granted and not precisely explained (Frost et al., 2005: 189). This might lead to partners, for example parents, lacking confidence to challenge the use of technical language they do not understand.

The inward *public interest* was seen by the transfer of policy from central government to a local setting using the *Every Child Matters* principles (DfES 2003) to inform board governance and policy making. However, because *Every Child Matters* refers to improving outcomes for children, this needed to look outward too. Lastly, the inward facing view of *motivation* was seen in the desire to collaborate in multi-agency partnership working, investing personal energy and sacrificing ones’ time to ensure the board continued. This was suggested by several interviewees in my research who attended meetings in order to participate in the planning and development of services. This is similar to Hudson’s description of partnership working incorporating different types of collaboration including mutual co-operation, ‘incentive based’ partnership working (Hudson, 1987). If no one turned up, or sufficient apologies were received, board meetings such as those in my case study would be cancelled. This resonates with the *micro* PSE discussed previously, suggesting a risk the board might be discontinued if members lacked a commitment to attend. Of course, it is difficult to separate this from the *meso* and *macro* PSE, but one can speculate on a link between an individual’s public service motivation and their dedication to turn up. Motivation to attend the board linked strategic work and a personal ethic, sharing some similarity with a ‘calling’ or ‘coming’ to care (Brannen, 2007; Cree and Davis, 2007).

In contrast, the board’s *outward* looking function was articulated in strategic plans to improve outcomes for service users. An example of outward facing *accountability* was identified in the frequent comments that the board was primarily accountable to disabled children and parents. These were admirable statements of the public interest, reminiscent of discussions on public service motivation and pro-social behaviour. However, associated with Newman’s (2008) ‘whom’ of accountability, it was unclear how the board could account for itself to *every* disabled child or parent, raising the question of how one might be held to account to ‘hard to reach’ groups

not yet identified. An outward looking function of *bureaucratic behaviour* (Pratchett and Wingfield (1996: 641-2) saw public servants demonstrating characteristics of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. However, in a multi-agency board bureaucratic behaviour meant engaging in the complexities of partnership working, rather than just demonstrating allegiance to bureaucratic traits. This did not mean the values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity were irrelevant but, as discussed elsewhere, the personal values of public servants were not found to be the most important factor (Chapman (1993c: 168). Additionally, bureaucratic behaviour saw the board extend outward to more senior boards, presenting its business to obtain authorisation to proceed with plans. A wish to improve services for disabled children and their families by using public money effectively was an example of the outward facing *public interest*. However, exertions to manage resources effectively may hide the motivation to protect one's own interests. Lastly, outwardly facing *motivation* was seen by attending the board and having a wider public interest in improving services for children and families motivated by agency and personal behaviour.

For the research question 'What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?', the *inward* and *outward* roles of the PSE values were informed by a variety of experiences and motivations but with no clear distinction between them. The two perspectives provide an additional way to analyse PSE values which at first glance seem well-defined, but highlight that their meanings are multifaceted.

The importance of the PSE and partnership working

The research question discussed here is 'What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?' Although the PSE was implied in discussions with participants, the language of partnership working was more evident.

The hidden PSE and the overt partnership

It is stated that the personal values of public servants are the most important element of public service (Chapman, 1993c: 168) but, if so, we must ask why there was so little focus on values at the board. The documents, observation and interviews found the terms integrated, partnership and multi-agency working widely used whereas the PSE values were absent. The PSE and the public interest were not explicitly

mentioned in board documents and the term the 'public' not used at all, although there were numerous references to disabled children and their families.

This finding was surprising in the light of discussions about the importance of values for public servants (Nolan, 1995; Civil Service Code, 2010). It has been suggested that public servants should be given a copy of the Nolan report on standards in public life (Barberis, 2001) and additionally that standards '...should be embedded throughout an organisation and its processes, with everyone taking ownership of high standards and regular monitoring of whether they are being met' (Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2013). However, it is difficult to know what this would mean in practice and whether this applies to all public servants. There was additionally the issue of local authority constitutions, setting out the ethical requirements for officers and councillors, as well as Midland City's own 'corporate' values identified in the research. Although these numerous codes and documents are asserted as central to the behaviour of public staff, neither the board documents, nor the observation, identified a comprehensive set of shared 'public' values. Furthermore, fieldwork did not reveal whether the standards and codes had informed the board.

It has been stated that public servants' motivation to carrying out rewarding work for society is paramount over self-interest or the pursuit of profit (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641). Although an unspecified value base might be interpreted from board documents there was no explicit obligation for participants to adhere to a set of values. The terms of reference was the only document articulating the board's aims, purpose, duties and obligations, providing advice on board behaviour and the management of any problems that arose there. In Pratchett's words, such documents shape and *simplify* the actions of public servants with 'logics of appropriateness' to provide a frame of reference for their sense of ethical duties and obligations (Pratchett, 2000: 121). However, in practice it was unclear if the terms of reference enhanced board relationships, professional behaviour and general courteousness.

Public service values therefore seemed 'hidden' and required interpretation. Whereas the role of public values is perhaps more legitimate in some professions than others, for example the civil service, it was puzzling that it was not possible to identify a

shared set of values for the board. If, as Chapman states (1993c), the values of public servants are important, there had not been many, if any, opportunities to reflect on them at the board. Chapman's work refers to civil servants and not local government officers and therefore care is required when applying the stated values of one group of staff wholesale onto another. Researchers on the PSE seem to have depended on these publications to provide a theoretical base for research. This gives the illusion that a shared value base exists between the civil service, local government and local governance, which was not found in my research.

As well as terms of reference, board agendas are necessary to manage board business, sequencing events and practices into a series of norms and procedures (Freeman and Peck, 2007: 916) or provide legitimacy for actions with what has been termed managerial hegemony theory (Cornforth, 2003: 10-11). The reflexivity required to discuss board values and ethics seemed unsuited in an agenda led meeting. In contrast, values seemed to be employed tacitly, such as the public interest articulated as aspiring to improve outcomes for young people by ensuring commissioning was 'child centred'. Participants may not have associated such comments with the public interest but, conversely, commentators on the public interest have not associated it with the discourse of outcomes.

Nevertheless, participants appeared to be comfortable discussing the values proposed in the fieldwork and understood the rationale for their use in the research. Nevertheless, the board was not designed to enable a sharing of values to outline the 'public' (Stoker, 2006: 44) and it seemed the PSE might be found more in the *micro* ethos of the individual rather than in shared values. This can be associated with the motivation to work in public services or care work (Perry, 1997; Brannen, 2007; Cree and Davis, 2007).

This weakness in the macro PSE of the board seemed inconsistent with the aspirations there to improve outcomes and wellbeing, which can be understood as having ethical meanings. The desire to develop a board ethos and the task of improving of outcomes suggested two issues. Firstly, participants' wish to define a qualitative or communal understanding of their shared values, an endeavour that had been difficult to pursue for a board that met formally and infrequently. This

corresponds with the view that a shared value base would improve the public value in the board (Stoker, 2006: 49). Furthermore, improving outcomes and wellbeing, although communicating a desire to improve services for disabled children, spoke to public service modernisation with concerns about the technical problems of translating outcomes into indicators (Churchill, 2007).

In sum, it was found that the PSE was hidden in the board whereas participants seemed more comfortable discussing partnership working. There were opportunities to discuss collaboration but not public values. This suggests the tenuousness of the PSE when compared to the substantive references to partnership working.

The changing meaning of the PSE and its values

The research question engaged with here is ‘In addition to the ‘traditional’ values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important for a board?’ Supplementing the values used in the fieldwork, interviewees suggested others they thought linked to the PSE. Some of these can be called ‘traditional’, but others can be allied with NPM and public service modernisation, discussed in chapter 2.

There is no agreed definition for public services modernisation and NPM. NPM is described as a move to disaggregation and competition in service delivery; introducing private sector management techniques; disciplined resource management; ‘hands-on’ management; measuring performance, and; greater emphasis on output (Hood, 1995; Lawton et al., 2013:30-31). This can be contrasted with a public administrative approach typified by bureaucracy, a public interest defined by politicians and experts, with a focus on services delivered by public organisations.

Although my research did not specifically set out to study modernisation per se, the findings identified that discussion was required. For instance, in addition to the traditional values used in my interview schedule, other values voiced by participants included traditional but also ‘modern’ values as well. Such blurring of values is therefore the rationale for a discussion of the transforming PSE.

Other values suggested by board members

Values suggested by participants included honesty, fairness, social justice and equality, words associated with the traditional PSE. The suggestion of such values seemed to correspond with the *micro PSE* and an allegiance to public service and a desire to serve the community. However, suggesting values is highly subjective, raising questions about whether some values have ascendancy over others. This links to the association between the macro and the micro PSE and delineating what is personal, organisational and professional. For example, Kernaghan (1992: 16) stated that public officials apply principles and standards to their actions, but this seems to suggest that officials follow agreed institutional values. Although it could be presumed that public officers share a set of values, as if there was an unspoken allegiance to them, it is debatable whether this really exists and their own value base cannot be overlooked.

Although participants expressed allegiance to the traditional PSE, values with an association to public service modernisation were also advanced. For instance, value for money was thought to be a prerequisite for strategic managers, associated with the public interest and being mindful about using taxes appropriately. This reference to value for money was an example of the use of business terminology and efficiency (Grimshaw et al: 2002: 478). The interviewee voicing this was employed in an arms-length organisation which, although closely aligned with the public sector, managed activities that had been contracted-out (Brereton and Temple, 1999: 456). He had perhaps received most exposure to a 'business' approach, resonating with Pratchett and Wingfield's view that professionals exposed to competition and market based reforms are less likely to believe in, or support, values related to the PSE (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 647-648).

Being 'evidenced based' was stated as important (Sheldon and Chilvers, 2000), associated with public accountability, as well as policy-making keeping pace with a changing and complex society (Reid, 2003: 7), two issues central to the work of the board. Participants commented that achieving ECM outcomes and using evidence of these achievements to inform service commissioning, was an example of being evidenced based.

The final example stated of a modernisation value was having a ‘customer’ focused approach, in contrast to using the term service users or citizens. This has been described by government as ‘personalising’ services, offering choice, being courteous and helping to improve service delivery (Brereton and Temple, 1999: 471; Needham 2006: 851). It was advanced that augmenting the PSE values with a customer approach would ensure the provision of excellent services, but implied a change from service users as citizens to consumers. Nevertheless those who used this language seemed to imply a wish to provide a good service rather than any desire to implement business like approaches.

However, it has been suggested that a customer focus has implications for public services allocated on need, with user expectations unmet and the concept of citizen in local democracy ‘eroded’ (Needham, 2006). These issues were pertinent to a board managing a programme of modernisation (AHDC) but, as previously discussed, linked to aspects of traditional public administration, namely the elected councillor’s interest in the board. Using customer based language would improve services for disabled children and when supplemented with partnership working would enhance outcomes. It seemed as if this alone provided the main avenue for improvement, but it is unclear how changing from the language of service users and clients to customer improved service delivery. Perhaps it was thought, as Needham suggests, that using ‘customer’ installed a ‘mind-set’ for public servants aspiring to improve services (Needham, 2006: 855).

In sum, participants supplemented the values used in the fieldwork by suggesting others they thought linked to the PSE. Some of these could be labelled ‘traditional’, while others can be associated with public service modernisation, pointing to the influence of management techniques from the business sector

Models of the transforming PSE

This final section identifies issues related to the PSE and partnership working in terms of changing values. It can be thought to illuminate the difficulties of articulating values sitting between traditional public administration and NPM. The main catalyst for this discussion on transformation and values was the interview with

a local authority participant and her perception of the relationship between Midland City's corporate values of 'success', 'excellence' and 'belief' and the values used in my fieldwork.

Labelling values as traditional or modern – as used in this dissertation - is one way of communicating change. However, it is an approach open to debate because without an agreed definition of the PSE - difficult to achieve because of the ideological issues bound up in it (Lawton, 2005; Needham, 2007) - evaluating such change is challenging. For instance, it is suggested that the gap between 'traditional' perspectives of the PSE and the modern reality appears to be increasing (PASC, 2002) but elsewhere stated that a golden age for public services possibly never existed (Lawton 1998: 51-66). Although these positions were exposed in the findings, if the gap is widening between the 'traditional' and the 'modern', it is useful to consider three perspectives of what this means, illustrated by my research findings.

Firstly, using values to convey change in public services can be understood as one set of values replacing another, for example values informed by business replacing those of the traditional PSE. This is a familiar way of theorising change as a 'binary' with the new superseding the old. A common example is the suggestion that by replacing public sector values with private sector ones services will improve, as advocated by NPM (Stoker, 2006). Participants expressed values that could be associated with both a 'traditional' view and one informed by public service modernisation, demonstrating recognition of both the 'new' and the 'old', even if they did not advocate a wholesale replacement of one set of values with another. This was seen in the stating of values without, perhaps, being aware of which tradition they might be associated with, such as voicing social justice alongside value for money. This corresponds with Brereton and Temple's view that a binary 'before and after' of the ethos is too simplistic (1999, 456-458).

Secondly, change in public services values can be thought of as one set of values merging with another. This has typically been described as private sector values informing the public, as manifested in NPM, or the public sector having a reciprocal effect on the private sector (Brereton and Temple, 1999). In my research, this

merging was exhibited by the participant who cross referenced Midland City's corporate values of success, excellence and belief with my fieldwork values. Rather than a separation between traditional and modern, this participant saw no problem in attempting to integrate them, as described in chapter 5. This indicated that the values might co-exist harmoniously or that one value base had assimilated, or even extinguished, the other. Although usually applied to the re-use of manuscripts, the term 'palimpsest' (Carter, 2010) can be used here to describe how traditional PSE values leave archaeological traces as modern values build upon them. This is helpful way to understanding how existing policy is re-used or re-branded. Furthermore, the concept of values merging is seen in the notion of shared and integrated values (Goodwin, 2013). However, Goodwin's approach is associated with front-line practice and the delivery of beneficial outcomes for clients; the other example is more clearly associated more with modernisation.

Furthermore, if Midland City's employees were expected to adhere to the corporate values, what was the purpose of their 'inherent' values, described in the discussion of the *micro* PSE? It could be argued these values had been 'appropriated' by the corporate values with officers expected to apply them without question. However, both a commitment to, and a critique of, the corporate values was articulated by interviewees. This identified a paradox for the PSE, because as a Midland City employee they were expected, as Pratchett and Wingfield state, 'to accept legitimacy of political structures as well as being committed to implementing political policy without reference to their own views' (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996: 641-2). But the findings suggest some participants were critical of the corporate values, with the PSE being more than just loyalty to one's employer. Although participants did not say they would speak out if their own values were challenged, this interpretation suggested that interviewees might present a professional face but only share their personal beliefs when it was safe to do so.

It was reported that the corporate values were used in staff appraisals implying right and wrong ways of interpreting them. This suggests the potential for a transition from a social justice to a 'surveillance' perspective, with a divide between reflexive professional values, informed by personal ethics, and databases capturing organisational data. This development is associated with NPM (Hood, 1995; Stoker,

2006; Lawton et al., 2013) and differed from reflexively using values as guiding principles for practice, informed by ‘phenomenological’ personal and ‘professional’ beliefs. Collecting management data (‘positivistic’ measurement) by focusing on behaviour within organisations and using audit technology for actuarial assessment is articulated by Barberis (2001), who suggests that the PSE has been corroded by an auditing and performance management culture.

Finally, it can be argued that different values interlocked, seen in the different professional values suggested by board members. Studying partnership working emphasises that values were in reality multi-faceted. This included professional values, described as different manifestations of the public interest depending on whether you were a teacher or a social worker. Also, professional values can differ within the same profession with front line practitioners, lower management and early career staff having a different view of public service values to senior staff attending a board. Of course, there will undoubtedly be a blurring between operational and strategic issues, identified in previous research on boards, (Edwards and Cornforth, 2003) with such issues not easy, or probably impossible, to separate.

Consequently, multiple or *divergent* perspectives were found in the same partnership augmenting the view that the PSE is a ‘vague and ambiguous concept’ (Brereton and Temple, 1999: 456) or supporting the view that there is ‘a set of values and beliefs that characterises those employed in the public sector’ (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1994: 11).

Summary of chapter 6

Chapter 6 has discussed four areas arising from the findings: the PSE and partnership working; values, the PSE and partnership working; the importance of the PSE and partnership working; and the changing meaning of the PSE and its values. These discussions inform the concluding chapter.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This final chapter considers the findings from the study in light of contemporary debates about public policy, partnership working and the PSE. The overarching aim of the dissertation was to investigate the PSE in a strategic partnership board. Several contributions for understanding the PSE and partnership working are made. Firstly, the study helps to identify the relevance of the PSE in contemporary public services. Secondly, it informs our understanding of the role the PSE plays in multi-agency governance. Thirdly, it identifies the potential use of public service values within the discourse of integration. Before considering these issues a methodological contribution is discussed.

Methodological contribution

In chapter 2 it was argued that Pratchett and Wingfield's repertoire of values (2006), supplemented by Plant (2003) may also be applicable to officers working in a partnership board where the resonance of these values can be assessed. This dissertation shows that it is possible to research the PSE in a public partnership board and use values to do so. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the PSE and values are not researched in sufficient depth in public partnership boards. Recent work continues to describe the PSE as 'transmitting' from organisations into public, private, and third-sector networks (Rayner et al., 2011). Theory will be enhanced by researching the PSE and values associated with it in a board to complement existing work and develop a more inclusive theory. My study provides a base for this.

Understanding the PSE - outdated or relevant?

This contribution is informed by the research question 'What is the meaning of the PSE for board participants?'

The research took place when the New Labour government was in power, before the austerity programme introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government after they were elected in May 2010. However, although the financial savings required in public services intensified after this date the PSE was already by

then subject to challenge and had been for several decades. This begs the question of whether it is outdated or relevant.

My study finds that the PSE has continued resonance, as described in previous literature (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; John and Johnson, 2008; Gregg et al., 2008). Although the fieldwork suggested that participants had not previously reflected on its meaning, the PSE was described in a way that suggested participants are sympathetic with its aims and values. Their descriptions resonate with literature discussed in chapter 2 on the PSE, PSM and public work as a calling (Perry, 1997; Brannen et al., 2007; Cree and Davis, 2007). Recent literature addresses this with differences and similarities between PSM and PSE identified (Rayner et al., 2011; Lawton et al., 2013); the antecedents of PSM explained (Vandenabeele, 2011); the relationship between PSM and the marketisation of public services considered (Moynihan et al., 2013); and PSM and local councillors (Pederson, 2013).

My study informs research by identifying that in a time of rapid change in public services there is contemporary currency in the term PSE. A key contribution was the *micro*, *macro* and *meso* PSE revealing the complexity inherent in the PSE and its meaning and significance for participants. I suggest this framework complements our current understanding of the PSE demonstrating its resilience, as well as providing theory for future research. This view corresponds with emerging literature on the multidimensional PSE by Rayner et al. (2011), identifying *public service belief*, on why individuals are motivated by the ethos; *public service practice*, about delivering services in accordance with it; and *public interest* on the ends individuals perceive the PSE to endorse. My description of the *micro* PSE can additionally be considered in the light of Salminen and Mäntysalo (2013) work on: 'traditionalists' focusing on equality and the conservation of public services; 'eco-bureaucrats' committed to sustainability and justice for future generations; and 'puritanists' with practice grounded in morality and working in the interest of citizens. My study also found that participants informed their practice with a variety of experiences, building on Salminen and Mäntysalo's statement that although public staff might be thought to be homogeneous, they have different understandings of the PSE.

In sum, our understanding of the PSE has been dominated by theoretical models describing it in a binary way, best exemplified by NPM (Hood, 1995; Lawton et al., 2013) with a focus on a transition from the traditional to the modern. However, my study shows that the PSE can be theorised differently, as demonstrated by the micro, macro and meso PSE. I suggest this first contribution demonstrates that the PSE has currency for public staff.

The PSE and its role in multi-agency governance

The second research question asked 'What role does the PSE play in a multi-agency partnership board?' This contribution assesses the role of the PSE in a board in terms of public value and the public interest.

Multi-agency working has grown exponentially in recent decades (Bochel and Bochel, 2004; Frost et al., 2005; Cameron et al., 2013) but it remains unclear how effective partnership working is or what it is for. It is claimed that multi-agency working is mutually beneficial for participants (Huxham, 1996), symbolic (Freeman and Peck, 2007) or bureaucratic (Fenwick et al., 2012).

The PSE is rarely researched empirically (Lawton et al., 2013) and not in boards where studies of leadership predominate (Dudau, 2009; Cornforth, 2012; Harrison et al., 2012). My study identifies that there is a role for the PSE in multi-agency governance although this role may be a little unclear. Criticisms of NPM (Hood, 1995; Lawton et al., 2013) have led to discussions of values-based management, with public value described as a 'corrective' to NPM thought deficient in the values required for public service (Horner et al., 2006; O'Flynn, 2007). Although such a growing interest in public value is stated (Davis and West, 2009) this conception of the public interest was not found in interviews with members of the board that was the focus of this study although the term outcome was used (Willis 2001; Dickinson, 2008). Although participants were experienced in multi-agency working and generally supportive of the PSE it was unclear what value meant to them in the board and in local governance.

Recent work on public value includes research focused on theory and practice (Benington and Moore, 2010); its managerial implications (O'Flynn, 2007); and

relationships with public action (Davis and West, 2009). Benington and Moore (2010) state that public value contributes to understanding the links between complex issues across multiple boundaries. These include the mixed provision of services; improved collaboration to tackle difficult problems; enhancing leadership and management and 'co-production' between producers and users, such as the parents in my case study board.

Although only one case study, my dissertation suggests themes connected with public value will manifest differently in specific settings. For example, parents attended the board and engaged in co-production (Needham and Carr, 2009; SCIE, 2013). The findings suggested this relationship was helpful to promote an approach sympathetic to this aspect of public value (Stoker, 2006; Benington and Moore, 2010). In contrast to this positive finding, it is stated that public value is created by a range of agencies, including the private and third sectors (Stoker, 2006; Benington and Moore, 2010). However, the board in this study was mostly populated by public sector employees with nominal involvement from the voluntary sector and no private sector representatives. This element of public value was found to be weaker, validating the original idea for my study that public boards are different to partnerships between the public and private sector (Hebson et al., 2003).

My study informs research by identifying how the PSE might be connected to the notion of value in a board. This connection is implied in the *macro* PSE with the board as an institution hosting the PSE. Board plans connected to the applied level with the *meso* perspective describing the PSE manifested in tangible actions. Moynihan et al. state that the motivation to work in public services should never be seen apart from its institutional environment (Moynihan et al., 2013). Although the relationship between individual, organisational and institutional values is ambiguous, I contend that partnership boards are also institutions that can host the PSE. Nonetheless, while aspirations to understand the value of the PSE within collaboration is helpful, they will also be deeply political in that they inevitably incorporate diverse understandings of power and value, as discussed in chapter 2.

The potential and limitations of public service values

As in the search for public value, the role of public service values remains challenging in light of current aspirations to define and manage joint working. The final research question was 'In addition to the traditional values associated with the PSE what other values are thought important by board participants?' This contribution considers the function of public service values and joint working. Although values are advanced as one of the 'keys' to unlocking the puzzle of integration (Goodwin, 2013) they are opaque.

The values used in my research were taken from previous work by Pratchett and Wingfield (1996) and Plant (2003). Participants were asked to identify additional values to those in the research schedule. By exploring PSE values in a board it was possible to see how they might apply to a multi-agency setting. Research continues on values, including a need for shared values (Goodwin, 2013); and the relationship between the PSE and codes and standards of behaviour for public officers (Heywood, 2012). Recent work by Cooke et al. (2013) examines accountability in the professions of teaching, medicine and law, but where they discuss professional accountability individually, my research locates it within a multi-agency partnership seeing asymmetrical accountability (Fenwick et al., 2012).

Participants in a recent study by Salminen and Mäntysalo, (2013) advanced traditional and new values although the authors noted that the emerging values had not modified traditional values as predicted. Linking to this, my participants also voiced values associated with modernisation with their use grounded in the desire to provide an effective service rather than adherence to market values. The separation of traditional from modern values is rather simplistic, as if the modern values had a transformative capacity lacking in traditional ones (Osborne, 2010: 418). With regard to organisations, Davis and West (2009) note that individuals may be pressurised to conform to values contradicting personal values and Brecher (2010) suggests professional codes may open the door to the measurement and quantification of values.

Although stated as central to public working it can be wrongly assumed that a shared value base exists (Chapman, 1993c). Kernaghan (2003) argues for a core set of

values that public staff can tailor to their own needs, similarly Goodwin (2013) suggests the need to develop shared values. And yet, commentators continue to assert that shared values are central to joint working although but there is a lack of clarity about whether a shared value is tacit or explicit. My research did not identify such a shared value base with language associated with partnership working more prominent. Although it is easy to voice that shared values are a good thing (Stoker, 2006) this does not necessarily happen instinctively. The search for shared values is additionally curious in light of the stated importance of values and standards for public staff (Nolan, 1995; Civil Service Code, 2010; Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2013). A gap between such codes and practice was identified in my study and has recently been highlighted by Heywood (2012) and Spicker (2014) who question the effectiveness and application of standards and codes thought to represent the PSE.

Transformations in policy and theory informing governance continue to challenge public service delivery. For instance, 'New Public Governance' (NPG) (Osborne, 2010; Osborne et al., 2012) has critiqued NPM, suggesting it is unfavourable for understanding how public services are delivered (Osborne et al., 2010). In a world of fragmenting services, NPG acknowledges the importance of relationships between state and non-state actors to tackle problems (Osborne et al., 2012). However, returning to the notion of shared values this undoubtedly complicates the concept of shared values. Osborne states attention is required on governing the contradictions between managers' and users' values; which values are required for co-production; the impact of contested values on delivering and using services; and, if individual public services have distinctive values and how can these are negotiated (Osborne, 2010). In sum, managing the values thought to represent the PSE in practice will undoubtedly continue to challenge those involved.

To conclude this final contribution, that 'public service values are applicable to exploring the PSE in multi-agency partnership working' my dissertation confirms that it is possible to research PSE values in a board. My study highlights that the notion of the shared value is easy to state but riven with complexity. Values must be subjected to questions and challenges in terms of their roles and meaning in the

delivery of future public services. In particular, I suggest the notion of implicit and explicit shared values requires more attention.

Implications for current professional practice

The findings of this study are relevant for professional practice in a number of ways.

First, with regard to the *micro* PSE, my research suggests that as practitioners advance in their careers they may require opportunities to consider their own value base, particularly as they move from front line posts into management. Such an opportunity might enable them to calibrate the relationship between their own values and management *responsibilities*, as these may not always be in harmony. Additionally, as managers move into the domain of commissioning services they may benefit from opportunities to consider how public values can be written into the contracts that they manage.

Second, on the *macro* PSE, a key finding is that boards themselves may benefit from having an opportunity to consider how they develop the notion of shared and integrated values. Values do not integrate by themselves and in a time of financial retrenchment may even fragment. Values must be meaningful if they are to inform practice, as well as being relevant to changes in service delivery. Such discussions could inform the terms of reference of a board and may help to improve members' understanding of its purpose. This will ensure multi-agency boards are not only *informed* by the values of participating organisations but that any *limitations* are communicated, including legislative requirements, professional codes and organisational requirements.

Third, although the board met to improve services, the term 'value' or 'public value' was rarely used, rather, participants referred to 'outcomes'. This draws attention to how public services are evaluated and the use, or not, of theoretical models by practitioners. More sophisticated approaches to evaluate the contributions of a diverse range of actors/agencies represented at a board might help emphasise the importance of this approach.

Lastly, the findings suggest a gap between official standards and codes defining the PSE and their use in partnership boards. Such standards and codes seemed irrelevant for the board and did not appear to have contributed to board governance and values. Perhaps this suggests a need for a review of these standards in the light of partnership working.

Limitations and future research

A number of limitations to this study are worth noting. First, the study used a single case study approach to explore the PSE in a partnership board (Yin, 2003: 39-42). It took place within defined parameters and I hope this focus strengthens what is reported. However, single case studies can be criticised for a lack of reliability and validity and were this study to be continued, the use of multiple case studies would help ameliorate these concerns. Additionally, multiple case studies would enable researchers to test out and develop our understanding further. In particular our understanding of the PSE would be strengthened by investigating boards characterised by greater involvement of the private sector, or where parent members play a greater role.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Partnership Working and the Public Service Ethos - Interview Schedule

1. Introduction

Introduce length of interview, confidentiality, termination etc.

- What is your job title/role/profession/qualification/background/experience?
- How did you become involved with the disabled children's partnership board?
- What is the board for? (*Prompt: policy and planning etc; formal, networking function (see Cornforth table) outcomes, values, etc*)
- What is your role as a member of the board? (*Prompt – symbolic; expert*)
- Thinking about the board what does partnership working mean to you?

2. What does working in public services mean to you?

- Why did you choose to work in public services? (*Prompt – public/private etc*)
- What values do you think are associated with public services? (*Prompt – public/private etc*)
- Which values are particularly important to you?
- Have these values stayed the same or changed overtime?
- Have you heard of the term the public service ethos? (prompt)
- Do you think there is such a thing as the public service ethos?
- Do you think the public service ethos has different meanings across the public sector? (*Prompt – profession, agency, individual; example*)
- Do you think the public service ethos has relevance to non-public organisations? (*Prompt – public, private, voluntary sectors; to organisations and professions and is the [same/different] for them; to individuals who have a greater or lesser commitment to it*)
- Can you tell me if being a member of the board has altered or enhanced your own values on working in public services? (*Prompt – challenges/improvements; values of employer; profession; partnership; example*)
- Can you tell me what sort of challenges you have experienced in the board (*Prompt - conflict/learning arising from meeting of different cultures etc*)

3. The Board

Values (*Returning to public service values, I would like to ask you about the values on this sheet*)

- How do you think they relate to the disabled children's board? (*See separate prompt sheet p4 –eg would you say a partner has authority/influence to instruct another board member to do something? Why not?*)
- What is the board's role in developing and promoting these values? (*Prompt - How?; is PSE enhanced by the board*) (*Prompt – shared value/values; outcomes; public interest*)

- Thinking about the board can you suggest any other values that might be associated with the public service ethos and partnership working?

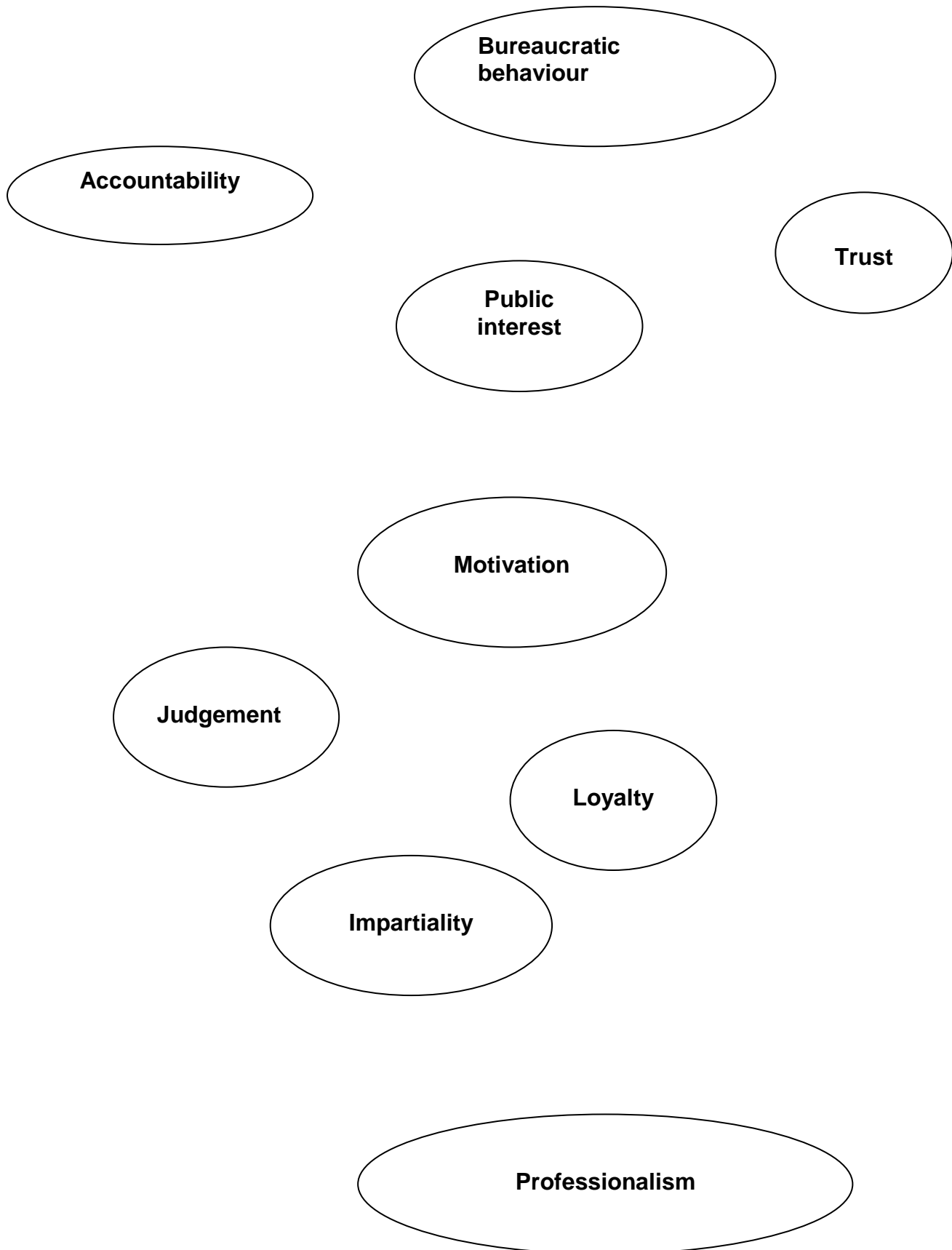
Policy

- Boards frequently talk about achieving positive outcomes – what would you describe as an outcome? (Prompt – Aiming High; what have you achieved))
- Recent policy on boards talks about ‘commissioning’ – what is commissioning? (*Prompt – Strengths and weaknesses of commissioning and fit to the PSE; private/3rd sector involvement etc; who commissions on whose behalf etc*)
- What do you think is the limit of the board’s influence and power? (Prompt – link to CT arrangements; hierarchical/vertical governance etc) (*MA governance; accountability*)
- What is the role of parents/carers on the board?

4. Conclusion

- Is there anything you want to say that you haven’t covered or you think I have missed?
- Is there anything you want to say about the future function of the board?
- Any final comments or questions you wish to ask me?

PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES SHEET



PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES - INTERVIEWER PROMPT SHEET

1. Accountability

Prompts

- *For example, who are the board/individuals accountable to? (The board, own agency, profession, Children's Trust etc)*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

2. Bureaucratic behaviour

Prompts

- *For example, a number of bureaucracies may 'border' at the board. Are they equal (eg voluntary sector and council).*
- *Do the different board members demonstrate different bureaucratic characteristics in the Board (eg honesty, integrity, impartiality, objectivity).*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

3. Public interest

Prompts

- *Who is the 'public' the board is interested in? (eg the user, the tax payer etc).*
- *How is this interest manifested eg by aspiring to positive outcomes. Are aspirations to the public interest strategic or also personal etc?*
- *Public servants extend an interest beyond the boundaries of their particular organisation or profession to serve the 'public good'.*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

4. Motivation

Prompts

- *What is the motivation for getting involved in the board (eg public servants identify with carrying out rewarding work for society over self-interest or a pursuit of profit).*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

5. Loyalty

Prompts

- *Public servants operating among a complex set of loyalties including their department,*
- *For example, who are the board/individuals loyal to? (The board, own agency, profession, Children's Trust etc)*
- *Loyalty to users?*
- *Loyalty to 'society'*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

6. Professionalism

Prompts

- *Interplay – professional and partnership values*
- *Interplay – professional and organisational values*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

7. Trust

Prompts

- *Trust in competence/integrity of other partners*
- *Trust in non-traditional/new partners eg private sector*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

8. Impartiality

Prompts

- *Playing by the rules eg enforcing them in an impartial and disinterested way*
- *Partners working to different rules – impact/implications?*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

9. Judgment

Prompts

- *Confidence in each other's judgement as no one dominant value*
- *Users may be disadvantaged by judgement (eg focus of a strategy)*
- *Can you give me an example(s) from the board?*

APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO CHAIR OF CASE STUDY BOARD



8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ

T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755

F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756

W: www.bristol.ac.uk/sps

Date:

Insert address of recipient here

Dear (Chair of Board)

Partnership Working and the Public Service Ethos in Children and Young People's Services

I am a part-time student on the Doctorate in Social Science (D.SocSci) Programme at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. In addition I work full-time as a Policy and Planning Officer in Leicester City Council Children and Young People's Services. I am also a qualified social worker.

As the major part of my studies I have to complete a doctoral thesis. My research aims to investigate the relationship between the public service ethos (PSE) and strategic partnership working in a children and young people's board. I am therefore seeking the views of board members on this issue in interviews, as well as observing key meetings and carrying out documentary analysis.

I recently spoke to the policy link for your board, X, who suggested your Disabled Children's Programme Board might be interested in being the case study site for my research. I would be grateful if you could consider my request with the board and let me know if you are interested. I would be happy to attend a board meeting to explain the aims and objectives of my research. If you wish to contact me to discuss I can be contacted on 0116 225 0199 (home) or 0116 252 6721 (work) or you can email me on: steven.parker@bristol.ac.uk

I also attach a participant information sheet for distribution to the Board. If you are happy to proceed please can board members return the form to me in the SAE enclosed. On receipt of the forms I will then contact them individual by letter and telephone.

Thank you for your help on this matter - I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Steve Parker

Sample of Participant Information Sheet attached

APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CASE STUDY BOARD



8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ

T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755

F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756

W: www.bristol.ac.uk/sps

Date:

Insert address of recipient here

Dear (Board Member)

Partnership Working and the Public Service Ethos in Children and Young People's Services

I am a part-time student on the Doctorate in Social Science (D.SocSci) Programme at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. In addition I work full-time as a Policy and Planning Officer in Leicester City Council Children and Young People's Services. I have a wide experience of policy work and am currently working on the Aiming High agenda in Leicester. I am also a qualified social worker.

As the major part of my studies I have to complete a doctoral thesis. My research aims to investigate the relationship between the public service ethos (PSE) and strategic partnership working in a children and young people's board. I am therefore seeking the views of board members on this issue in interviews, as well as observing key meetings and carrying out documentary analysis.

I recently attended the Disabled Children's Programme Board who agreed suggested your Disabled Children's Programme Board might be interested in being the case study site for my research. I would be grateful if you could consider my request with the board and let me know if you are interested. I would be happy to attend a board meeting to explain the aims and objectives of my research. If you wish to contact me to discuss I can be contacted on 0116 225 0199 (home) or 0116 252 6721 (work) or you can email me on: steven.parker@bristol.ac.uk

I also attach a participant information sheet for distribution to the Board. If you are happy to proceed please can board members return the form to me in the SAE enclosed. On receipt of the forms I will then contact them individual by letter and telephone.

Thank you for your help on this matter - I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Steve Parker

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Partnership Working and the Public Service Ethos in Children and Young People's Services

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Why am I doing the study?

I am a part-time student on the Doctorate in Social Science Programme at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. As the major part of my studies I have to complete a doctoral thesis. My research aims to investigate the relationship between the public service ethos (PSE) and strategic partnership working in a children and young people's board. I am therefore seeking the views of board members on the relationship between the public service ethos and partnership working.

Why have you been chosen?

You are being invited to take part in this study because you work within the Disabled Children's Partnership Board that has expressed an interest in taking part in this research project.

What will happen if you take part?

If having read this information sheet you are willing to take part in the project I will arrange a convenient time to interview you at your place of work. Before the interview you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the project. I will then ask you to sign a form saying that you understand what the study is about and that you have voluntarily agreed to take part. After you have given your consent, I will interview you for no more than an hour. If you agree, I will tape record the interview because it helps to make sure that nothing is forgotten.

Do you have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in my project. If you do decide to take part you are still free to stop at any time. If you want to stop you do not have to give any reason.

What will happen to all the information you provide?

All information collected during the project will be kept strictly confidential. Information will be stored anonymously and will only be identified by a reference number. Only I will have access to the code linking the reference number to each

person who takes part. The findings of my project will be anonymised so that the identity of all participants will not be recognisable. The findings will be presented as part of my thesis.

Contact for further information

If you need any further information, please contact my doctoral supervisor Ailsa Cameron who can be contacted at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ. Tel: 0117 954 6707

Email: a.cameron@bristol.ac.uk

APPENDIX 5: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Partnership Working and the Public Service Ethos in Children and Young People's Services

Participant consent form

Student Researcher: Steven Parker

Please tick box

Have you read the information sheet? ☐

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the project? ☐

Have you received enough information about the project? ☐

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time, without giving reason? ☐

Do you agree to participate in the project? ☐

Do you agree to allow me to tape record your interview? ☐

Name of participant date signature

Name of person taking consent date signature

Contact for further information

If you need any further information, please contact my supervisor Ailsa Cameron (who is supervising my thesis) School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ. Tel: 0117 954 6707

Email: a.cameron@bristol.ac.uk

APPENDIX 6: PARTICIPANT CODES

Code	Role
01SN	Disabled Children and Young People's Commissioning and Development Manager, Local Authority.
02QV	Partnership Development Manager, Local Authority.
03FM	Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities Co-ordinator, Connexions.
04WR	Partnership Director, Learning and Skills Council
05PN	Manager, Learning Disabilities Services, Local Authority.
06HM	Commissioning Manager, Local Authority.
07HJ	Headteacher representing Special Schools Forum, Midland City.
08HH	Commissioning Manager, Local Authority.
09GC	Head of Commissioning, Local Authority.
10AA	Director of Children's Services, Midland City South Primary Care Trust.
11AC	Head of Educational Psychology Service, Midland City Council.
12LJ	Pan Midland City Associate Director of Commissioning - Children and Young People, Primary Care Trust.
13BC	Head of Transition, Local Authority.
14JPT	Champion for Disabled Children and Young People
15FK	Principal Officer, Community, Play and Arts, Local Services, Local Authority.
16JJ	Constituency Director, Local Services, Local Authority.
17GA	Secondary Headteacher Representing Mainstream Secondary Schools, Midland City.
18ES	Parent Forum representative.
19HC	Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning, Midland City Council
20WB	Operations Manager, Learning Disability Services Adult and Communities Directorate, Local Authority.

APPENDIX 7: ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

FINAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY OF PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS (22.1.10)

1	PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DETAILS
1.1	Background (eg public/private /career/profession/qualifications)
1.2	Experience, including involvement in multi-agency and partnership working
1.3	Involvement with board – own history/applying experience
2	THE PSE AND THE INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER
2.1	Knowledge/awareness of PSE
2.2	Belief in/meaning of the PSE (reified/fragmented etc)
2.3	Origin of ‘own’ PSE (eg calling; faith, justice, religion, care, teaching, healing)
2.4	Personal motivation for public work eg serving
2.5	Value base (changing/unchanging eg as moved into management)
2.6	Other important values for interviewee
2.7	Professional values
3	PSE VALUES AND THE BOARD
3.1	Accountability (to who; what – see Newman; AH grant not ring-fenced in PCT etc)
3.2	Bureaucratic behaviour (eg merging/clashing/constraining/facilitating eg EIA)
3.3	Public interest (to whom?)
3.4	Motivation (passion and value, bureaucracy, symbolic, resource)
3.5	Loyalty
3.6	Professionalism
3.7	Trust
3.8	Impartiality
3.9	Judgment
3.10	Other values suggested by interviewees (personal/organisational)
3.11	Different interpretations of values by partners (eg customer/ threshold)
3.12	How values relate to the board (inside governance/ outside outcome view)
3.13	Board’s role in developing and promoting values/changing values (see 2.5)
4	PARTNERSHIPS, POLICY AND THE BOARD
4.1	Partnership – definitions and types/values
4.2	Governance (structures/descriptions/types)
4.3	Strategy/protocols/legislation (cf. integration)
4.4	Board resources/finances
4.5	Understanding of organisational/individual/board roles/need/purpose (inc. parents)
4.6	Relationships/ communication/ tension (each other; ‘outsiders’ eg voluntary/private providers)
4.7	Fragmentation/cohesion
4.8	Power
4.9	Commissioning
4.10	Outcomes

APPENDIX 8: SCHOOL FOR POLICY STUDIES: ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School, both staff and PhD students. It should be given to the secretary of the Ethics Committee at the time of submission of the proposal. If it is not submitted at this point then it should be submitted when the proposal is funded. It should also be filled out by PhD students and submitted as part of their upgrade documents. All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding. See <s:\sps\policies\ethics> for statements of the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.

Key project details:

1. Proposer's Name

Steven Parker

2. Project Title

Partnership working and the public service ethos in children and young people's services
--

3. Is the approval you are seeking for:

Proposal/Outline bid	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">√</div>
Active project with external funding (inc PhD)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px;"></div>
Research activity funded through QR	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px;"></div>

Tick one only

4. When is ethical approval required by? (please write in date)

30 th April 2009

5. (Postgraduate students only) Who is supervising your research?

Ailsa Cameron

Ethical procedures

6. Does your project require referral to/approval by an external ethics committee?

Yes	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px;"></div>
No	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">√</div>

If yes, which committee?

7. a) If your project requires external ethical approval, has it been reviewed already?

 b) What was the outcome?

8. We are required to check all projects (not just those in the health field) to determine whether they require a research sponsor and/or fall within the requirements of the Research Governance framework established by the DoH.

Does your project falls within the Research Governance framework? (if in any doubt, please see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/research/governance> for details)

- Yes

√

 No

--

9. Which of the following best describes the structure of this research project:

- University of Bristol researchers only (Go to 11)
 University of Bristol principal investigator/one or more researcher from other institutions (Go to 11)
 Principal investigator from other institution/University of Bristol researchers contributing (Go to 10)

Tick one:
√

10. Can you confirm that the project has been (or is going to be) approved by an ethics committee run by the PI's institution that operates an equivalent standard of ethical scrutiny to UoB?

Yes

Please supply copy of approval for our records

No

Please submit full details for ethical review by SPS

11. Have all subcontractors we are using for this project (including those providing services such as transcription) formally agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?

Yes

√

Not yet

Note: Please ensure agreement is secured before they start to work on the project.

Not applicable

ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of topics is intended to act as a comprehensive stimulus to ethical considerations throughout a project. Responding to these questions prompts the making of clear statements of intent, mechanisms of approach and consideration of hazard arising from research in a manner which can be understood by lay people and research professionals alike. While some of the questions appear not to immediately concern ethical issues, any matter that may affect the success of research is of indirect ethical interest if it may expose respondents to risk of harm for no obvious gain.

Please note – the School's Ethics Committee comprises people working in a range of fields. They not necessarily specialist in, or especially familiar with, your area of work. Please supply information at a level of detail that will allow them to comprehend the nature and approach of your project. Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

1. PROJECT TITLE:

Partnership working and the public service ethos in children and young people's services

2. EXPECTED DURATION:

Give some indication of commitment required of participants and time given by researcher.

Research Team

The fieldwork will last for 4 - 5 months. I will conduct all of the research, analysis and writing up myself.

Participants

Disabled children multi-agency strategic board including approximately 20 managers

3. IDENTITY OF FIELD RESEARCHERS AND ORGANISATIONAL BASE:

Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications and functions in the proposed research of all those holding responsible positions and who might be in direct contact with participants. This offers an estimate of competence together with a chain of responsibility and accountability. Are all the researchers proposed for this project fully conversant with any sensitivities, both general and specific, associated with conducting research with participants in this field or will they require training before fieldwork commences (esp. relevant for new members of staff)? How will such training be organised/provided?

Steven Parker, D.SocSci Candidate, BA, MA, CQSW will manage and write up the thesis and disseminate the findings. I have successfully completed all of the D.SocSci research modules.

I have 20 years experience of working as a social worker and strategic planner in local authority children and young people's services. I am experienced at partnership working having written a number of multi-agency strategies and strategic children's plans, as well as attending partnership boards. I will meet with my supervisor, Ailsa Cameron, on a regular basis to discuss my progress. I recently received a satisfactory mid-review at SPS.

4. PURPOSE OF STUDY:

Please indicate the reasons for carrying out the study. Aims and objectives might include hypothesis testing or policy evaluation. Please indicate any potential "value" likely to be added by the research to the subject group and/or society in general.

My research investigates the relationship between the public service ethos (PSE) and strategic partnership working in a multi-agency disabled children and young people's partnership board. I am interested in these themes as public service ethos theory has previously tended to be applied to individual organisations/professions and not to partnerships, as in my work. In addition I advance a potential theoretical development to investigate the PSE, the personal public service ethos (PPSE) as an alternative to the "reified" or over-rationalised PSE.

Potential value for the subject group is detailed in "Benefit of the Research for Participants" in 7 below.

5. **SOURCES OF FUNDING:** Please state the organisation, individual or group providing the finance for the study. Does the project have any form of sponsorship?

The study is mostly self-funded. Leicester City Council and the British Association of Social Workers have made small grants towards the costs.

6. **DESIGN OF THE STUDY:** What research methods are being employed? How and from where will any secondary data sets be obtained? How will any individual respondents be chosen? What will be required of them? Time commitments and data-collection settings should be identified. Please supply enough detail to allow the committee to judge whether this method is appropriate from an ethical perspective.

Research Aims

The overarching aim of this qualitative research study is to investigate the relationship between multi-agency partnership working and the public service ethos (PSE) with a multi-agency partnership board as a case study. The first order research question asks how the PSE is expressed by the individuals, relationships and texts of a multi-agency partnership board. Several sub-questions inform the research:

- What do the PSE and the PPSE mean for the stakeholders involved?
- How does public-public partnership working challenge existing understandings of the PSE?
- Does public-public partnership working produce a distinct set of values over the "traditional" PSE?
- What role do stakeholder relationships play between partnership working, the PSE and the PPSE?
- What role do relationships between stakeholders play in partnership working, the PSE and the PPSE?

Methodology

The case study site will be a disabled children multi-agency strategic board.

It is highly unlikely that I will not be able to identify such a board, but if this arises I may need to approach a board that manages a different needs group for my case study site.

Sample Size: 15 - 20 managers

Data Collection Techniques: Documentary analysis; non-participant observation; semi-structured interviews.

Sample: The sample will comprise of a range of multi-agency managers from a local authority disabled children and young people's board. They will represent their own agencies on the board e.g. health, children's services (social care and education functions), other local authority functions, voluntary sector, Connexions etc.

Stage 1 - Documentary analysis

Partnership strategic reports, plans, protocols and agreements will be evaluated to consider their relationship to the PSE, as well as highlighting other issues pertaining to the research questions. The documentary analysis will help me to refine the research questions for the interview stage.

Stage 2 - Non-participant observation

This stage may include observations of relevant preparatory meetings, but the main focus of observation will be the main programme board chaired by a Service Director in Children's Services. As with stage 1, I expect this stage to help me to refine the research questions for the interviews.

Stage 3 - Semi-structured interviews

The interview sample will be the case study partnership board. Individual interviews will be carried out with members of the board including senior and middle ranking staff such as the chair, heads of service, service managers, team managers, partnership managers and strategic officers. Interviewees are likely to include Children and Young People's Services (social care and education functions) health providers, Connexions and the voluntary sector. Interviews will last between 25-45 minutes, although participants will be able to terminate the interview at any stage.

Ethical Framework

The ESRC Research Ethics Framework will be followed throughout the project.

7. **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND HAZARDS:** What risks to the participants are entailed in involvement in the research? Are there any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? What is the possibility for benefit to those who participate? What procedures have been established for the care and protection of participants (e.g. insurance, medical cover) and for the control of any information gained from them or about them?

As my research and interviews will be with professionals this is a low risk project and there are no obvious physical dangers for participants. Participating in the project may involve the discussion of sensitive political or interpersonal issues relating to strategic working. As an experienced interviewer I will manage the interview process respectfully, and if a line of discussion is uncomfortable for the participant I will ask if they are happy to continue with this theme, or move onto another issue. It is very unlikely I will need to terminate an interview but will do so if required.

When I write up my findings, all identifying features such as names, places etc will be removed. Because of the intimate nature of the board text may potentially lead a reader of the findings to recognise their board colleagues. This may be inevitable in that if I will need to be tactful in how I present contentious findings so as not to create problems for the board when I share my findings with them.

Benefit of the Research for Participants

Managers will have the opportunity to discuss their views on working within public services and the partnership working agenda. This offers them the opportunity to openly discuss and reflect on their experiences of partnership working and will enhance the understanding of collaborative processes they are involved with.

Control of information

See sections 10, 11 and 12.

8. **RESEARCHER SAFETY:** What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? What procedures are to be used to manage these risks? What mechanisms will be used to ensure that all the researchers involved in the project are aware of, and abide by, these procedures?

As my research and interviews will be with professionals this is a low risk project and there will be no need to set up any security procedures. I will give my supervisor a list of (a) meetings to be observed and venue, and (b) individual interview times and venue (c) I will make regular update phone calls to my supervisor.

9. **RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES:** Is there any sense in which respondents might be "obliged" to participate – as in the case of students, prisoners, or patients – or are volunteers being recruited?

Participation will be completely voluntary. If a member of the case study board does not wish to take part in the research exercise their decision will be respected.

10. **INFORMED CONSENT:** How will this be obtained? Consent of all participants MUST be requested and put in terms easily comprehensible to lay persons. This should be both ORALLY and also in WRITTEN FORM and preferably should be witnessed. An information sheet setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent. If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate.

Consent

When my research site is confirmed (see Letter 1 attached) I will distribute Letter 2 (attached) with a leaflet connected to Letter 2. Participants will be asked to return an 'opting in' form attached to the leaflet.

An information leaflet, explaining who I am, how to contact me, the aims of the project, what is involved, confidentiality policy, attributing quotes to agencies/job titles and not naming individuals, and the voluntary nature of the project will be made available. Participant's rights will be detailed, for example within the interview process, and what they are consenting to, including the right to stop the interview at any stage, confidentiality and child protection, anonymity, storage of data and how their responses will be used. The leaflet will also set out how I will present the findings.

I will attend the case study partnership board before fieldwork commences to explain my research and what is involved. Board members will be able to ask questions at this time, and talk with me individually afterwards if required.

Those wishing to take part in the study will need to sign a consent form before they participate. If individuals do not wish to participate, for example in the interviews, I will factor this into my interview research schedule. If they do not wish to participate in a board observation, and I find out on the day, I will need to consider other options for proceeding. For example, I may decide not to observe the board, or continue with the observation but not recording information from those not wishing to take part. I will endeavour to negotiate the best outcome, and where possible discuss any ethical issues which arise with my supervisor.

11. **DATA PROTECTION:** How will this be achieved? How will the project comply with the requirements of current data protection legislation? What are the proposed data storage arrangements and how will security be maintained? Please explain the procedures to be operated during the period when the project is active and procedures relating to data archiving or disposal to be adopted when the project ends.

Data Protection Legislation

The project complies with the data protection legislation as it relates to data collected solely for research purposes.

Data Storage – active phase

All interview tapes/transcriptions will be kept in secure cabinets that will be locked at all times.

Any computer data will only be stored anonymously on secure password-protected drives.

All contact details, participant identification codes and interview transcripts data will be stored separately.

Only I will have access to participant contact details and data that is not anonymised.

Data Storage – archiving/disposal phase

Once the project has been completed all data will be archived in secure confidential storage. Five years after the thesis is completed all data will be confidentially disposed of. Participants will be made aware of this in the consent information.

- 12 **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY:** How will the confidentiality of records and any potential identifying information about the respondents be ensured? Will the project be offering confidentiality or anonymity? Will this cover data storage, data reporting or both? Is the confidentiality of the data provided going to be conditional (eg. if the respondent reveals involvement in unlawful behaviour or responses indicate that there may be child protection issues)? If confidentiality is conditional, on what does it depend? How will that be explained when gaining consent for participation? What protocols are going to be in place to deal with situations in which the researchers feel that it is appropriate not to keep data confidential?

Confidentiality of records

All transcriptions of documents, observation and interviews will be kept separate at all times from participants' contact details. All confidential data will be stored anonymously in secure lockable cupboards only assessable by me. Only I will have access to data that has not been anonymised. All data will be confidentially destroyed five years after the thesis is completed. Participants will be made aware of the above procedures.

Anonymity

The case study site will be anonymised. All participants will be anonymous, and given job titles in the first instance. All information will be anonymised before being released in any form. All identifying features such as names, places etc will be removed. Text which may potentially identify a participant to someone they know will not be used in its original or full form.

13. **DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS:** What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc?

The research will result in a range of publications in academic journals. A summary report for all those taking part in the research will be made available. I will present the research at national and international conferences for both academic and professional audiences.

14. **REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:** Are you content for the Ethics Committee to review your proposal on the basis of the information provided on this document and any attachments, or would you like to attend the next meeting of the Ethics Committee to discuss your project in more detail?

Review on the basis of paperwork only
Attend the Ethics Committee

Tick One Only:

<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE ATTACH COPIES OF ANY DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO DATA COLLECTION THAT YOU ARE PROPOSING TO USE.

This could include approach letters, leaflets explaining the project, consent forms, protocols regarding confidentiality.

Please find attached:

1. Initiation Letter 1 to chair/Director (1 side)
2. Letter 2 to board members with PIS (below) attached (1 side)
3. Information leaflet with tear off opt in consent slip to be attached to letter 2 (1 side)
4. Draft interview schedule (1 - 2 sides)

APPENDIX 9: EXTRACT FROM EXCEL FRAMEWORK

NAME	Background	Experience	Involvement with board	Other Issues
01SN Disabled C&YP Commissioning & Development Manager	(1) My current job title is Commissioning and Development Manager, specifically around the integrated strategy for disabled children.	(1) And in terms of my background – I’ve been in this role for about three years now – and previous to joining this role I worked in the Scrutiny Office where I was Health Scrutiny Manager. Previous to that I worked in the Education Service, and previous to that in Social Services. So I’ve got kind of a broad background of working with health education and social services.	(1) When I came into post the Children and Young People’s Directorate had just done a review into disabled children’s services and were embarking on the production of an integrated strategy for disabled children. And in terms of the review that was conducted there were recommendations in there about creating the post that I’m in and having somebody who could take forward the recommendations and bring some overall coordination to the job as well as implementing the integrated strategy. So that’s how I became involved in the strategy. One of the key recommendations of the review and an objective in strategy was around establishing a disabled children’s board because it was felt that within the city there wasn’t that accountability in leadership for disabled children’s services. And, as I said, it was fragmented across different partner agencies, and so the board was there to kind of bring all that together and have some accountability of leadership for disabled children’s services.	(1) WHY BOARD NEEDED? Because we do need that accountability in leadership because we do need an overview about all the different initiatives that are going on around disabled children’s services, that we needed somebody or some forum with a bit of clout that you could go to, somebody that key agencies and key professionals would listen to and say, well, actually this is the directive that’s come from up on high; and rather than individual organisations battling things out between themselves or professionals having to deal with those issues on the ground this was at a very strategic level that you’d have those discussions and people with accountability and authority to actually act on those issues and bring a resolution. The Disabled Children’s Board when it was set up was actually a sub-group of the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board so disability was on the agenda at that very high level. So I think that’s what was important about the Board.
02QV Partnership Development Manager CYPF	(2) My job title is Children and Young People’s Partnership Development Manager and basically the role is to provide high quality administrative/development support to children’s trusts arrangements issues.			(2) WHY BOARD NEEDED So ultimately the Disabled Children and Young People’s Partnership Board as a strategic body I think is essential to addressing outcomes for children and young people in the city. I hope I’m not boring you too much with all this.
03FM Learning Difficulties & Learning Disabilities Co-ordinator, Connexions	(3) My job title is Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Co-ordinator within ((xxxx)). My personal background is that I worked as a careers advisor		(3) I inherited it really when I took over this role. My predecessor was a member of the Board and I just sort of took over from there, so how he originally got involved,	
	(3) I worked for a reasonable number of years as a careers advisor in special schools with clients with learning difficulties and disabilities.			(3) WHY THE BOARD IS NEEDED I think what the Board brings is, it does bring together a multitude of services which don’t always communicate as best as they could. And the other important element of it is that it is much <u>“more focused on the needs of users of services than some of the other meetings that happen, which can be all very strategic and high flying but the voice of people that actually benefit from services, or hopefully benefit from services can be lost”</u> .

	(3) My role or the post itself is pretty much as it says on the title, it's about co-ordinating the way that the service is delivered to young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.			
04WR Partnership Director LSC	(04) I'm one of four partnership directors here at ((xxxx)) and ((xxxx)) Learning Skills Council. And basically this is responsible for planning and funding of post-16 learning ((0:00:40?))	(04) Prior to that, well, I started off in schools as a school teacher, then moved into further education where I spent most of my career and in which I taught for several FE colleges, and then basically moved to the Training and Enterprise Council and the Training Skills Council. I guess my background had always been involved with education, and more latterly in terms of access to learning, and as a partnership director	(04) I'm very much responsible for a number of colleges and a number of thematic policy areas, one of which is LLDD, and hence the fact that I'm on the Disabled Children and Young People's Partnership.// HOW BECAME INVOLVED IN BOARD Yeah. As I say, I lead for this local office on LLDD. The Learning Skills Council is obviously very committed to LLDD, it has statutory responsibility, and indeed in carrying out those responsibilities it's not going to do it on its own, it seeks to work with other partners of which the obvious one is the local authority.	(4) WHY IS BOARD NEEDED? Why is the Board necessary? <u>I think that the Board is necessary in order to be a point of coherence, to try and pull things together, as I say, no one agency is going to tackle this problem on its own.</u> We have a statutory responsibility, the local authority clearly has a responsibility leading up to 16, so one of the things we would be very much keen on looking at between our respective responsibilities is to make sure the join and the transition from pre-16 to post-16 is a lot better than it has been in the past. So I think for the Board the Board is there in order to try and look at these major issues, it obviously has a role in terms of taking forward strategy and by getting the relevant parties round the table that strategy is going to be more likely to be effective.
05PN Manager Learning Disabilities Services Adults and Communities Directorate	(5) I'm a qualified Social Worker by background		(5) The reason I became involved with the ((xxxx)) Board is because of the role that I currently am carrying out as a requirement	(5) (WHY BOARD NEEDED) I think it's an absolute must really because I think it everybody from different backgrounds to come together and I think we have to be seen to be transparent because we're working with professionals but we're working with those people who are receiving our services or allegedly will be receiving so they need to know what's on offer because we're customers aren't we, you and I would want to go to a shop, we'd need to know what they're offering. Likewise I think as a service provider they would need to know and really they don't have to be under any illusion to that we're going to be providing with them things that we may not be ultimately so they need to know and I think that's where a lot of confusion can actually be avoided.